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TWENTY-NINE CHATS

AND

ONE SCOLDING

BY

Rev. Fred. C. O'Neill

NEW YORK
CHRISTIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION
PUBLISHING COMPANY
26 BARCLAY STREET
1905

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Bishop of Newark, N. J.

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TO

THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER

Catherine

AND TO THAT OF MY BROTHER

Rev. George Doane

WHOM THE MASTER HAS CALLED HOME TO REST

THIS LITTLE WORK IS LOVINGLY

DEDICATED.

Preface.

At no time in the history of the world could truth afford to hide itself in a fog of words, but there never was a time when clear thinking was more needed than in these early years of the 20th Century. We have so many things to think about, that hazy or misty ideas only make us angry. We have no time to waste in dispelling the mist, and so we pass on; so much the worse for the ideas.

But it is especially in the vast field of study covered by the word Religion, that we need the clearest of clear thinking. Modern educators insist a great deal on "object-lessons," and possibly they fancy that they have invented this method of vivid, realistic teaching. There was, however, a Teacher who came on earth nearly two thousand years ago. It was His divine mission to transmit to mankind whatsoever He had heard from the Father. This Teacher of teachers, as well as Teacher of the little ones, taught by object-lessons. "Consider the lilies of the field," He said, "see how they

grow." "Look at the birds of the air." And the wise man had said in the Old Testament: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, and consider her ways."

Rev. Father F. C. O'Neill, in his book entitled "Twenty-nine Chats and one Scolding," has imitated the Master; he has gone to the lilies and the birds and the ant to point his beautiful lessons for both children and grown people.

No one slept, we may be sure, when the Master spoke by the seashore of Galilee; no child will squirm on his hard chair, or yawn, I warrant, when Father O'Neill's vivid pictures pass before his eyes. Every teacher of Christian Doctrine will welcome this book with both arms.

WILLIAM O'BRIEN PARDOW, S. J.

Author's Preface.

I AM creeping out into the world with this little work tucked under my arm, with a feeling very much akin to that, had by the young chap at school, who ambles out for the first time upon the stage. In his quivering little heart the youngster knows that he is not going to create a great stir by his feeble attempt. At the same time he fears that at any moment he may be called in—in case of failure—by the teacher who is strenuously whispering encouragement to him, in the side-wings,—and given a sound scolding.

What led me to write such a tiny book as this I cannot tell. I know there are many, many in the great school of the Priesthood who are better fitted a thousand times to do this sweet work for the little folks, than I am.

Giving little sugar-coated pills of truth to the younger children is to my mind the most sacred duty of the Priest. I see no fairy ship on the horizon coming in, laden with sweet things for the babes, so I am launch-

ing out my boat in the hope of teasing some gifted one into the same task.

I hope this little tome will do some good. That it may coax some little soul to lose false fear and come closer to the Master, and see how sweet-tempered He is. If my first appearance prove a failure, I will have some little twitch of regret, of course. I will then go into the side-wings of obscurity and tell my tutor, that as yet I am not schooled sufficiently to say anything worth being listened to, even by the tots.

However, let me say to the sterner folks I have come out to speak my little piece with the purest of intentions. If my attempt be met with disapproval, I will ever afterwards be quiet.

You little ones I do not fear, I rather think you will like my chats. So here you are! If I should please Our Saviour by my effort, if I should cement some little hearts more closely to His, I won't mind a little scolding.

F. C. O'Neill.

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The Leprahawn and the Golden Cup.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

Long, long ago, when the sun grew very ill, and had to stay a-bed, and the moon shone night and day, and the stars were used as diamonds in the angels' crowns, I saw a timid little fairy come from, you'll never guess where, hiding behind a mossy stone.

She grew so frightened at beholding me, that I felt sorry I had come across her path, but, to convince her that I would do her no evil, I plucked a violet that was nodding to sleep near by, and held it up so as to let the little stranger know that I was her friend. She straightway knew the meaning of the token, for, blushing like a modest child, she strode softly over to where I stood, maybe she was loath to wake the sleeping birds; I know not. But at any rate, she whispered to me in the gentlest way, "I have an ardent wish, good sir, and perhaps you can help me to gratify it." "I certainly will if I can," said I, pleased at the trust she put in me.

"Well," she sighed, "while I am a real fairy, as you can see, I live not here in Erin,

but I came from an island many miles across the sea. One of our ancients told me, that in this fertile land, there thrives a set of little artisans called Leprahawns. Is it so?" I told her she was well informed. "I hear they are makers of fairy boots, and that they carry chalices of gold,"—she hurried in a panting breath." "Yes, it is so," I assured her.

"Now," said she, assuming a sweeter and more deliberate tone, "our great Sheik, who holds power over life and death, vowed me that should I be so fortunate as to get a chalice from one of these strange little men and take it to him, he would free my sisters and myself; for you know in that isle, fairies are slaves to the Sheik."

"Well," I replied, gleaning now the purpose of her mission, "you are in the best spot in the world to see a leprahawn! Here in the Vale of Arklow, they frolic as they work the hours away. Come," said I, gently taking her tiny hand in mine, "let us sit here on this stone, behind which you hid, and as I live, one will soon come whistling by."

"Hark! what is that?" said she, as a soft rapping noise, like that a ghost would make, startled us. I looked up quickly, and on the trembling limb above me, I beheld a raven.

Now, I knew from childhood that ravens and leprahawns usually sought each other's company, so, I unfolded the doleful tale of the foreign fairy to the raven, who seemed to grow very sad over it all.

Scarcely a moment had passed, when, seemingly in response to a strange note of the raven, we beheld a rosy-cheeked leprahawn come waddling down the path. Sure enough, from his belt a golden chalice dangled. He must have left his glasses at home, for he hobbled very close to where we sat, then, beholding us, he took to his heels and hastened on toward the Avenmore River. It would make you laugh to see Miss Fairy and me following in the chase. Poor Leprahawn was very stout and soon slowed in his pace. I was about to grasp the coveted gold chalice, when without warning the little villain turned and flung it into a deep pit, containing some fine yellow sand. It instantly sank beneath the surface; Miss Fairy wrung her hands in dismay. I felt sad too.

"Why do you weep, fair one?" said an old Alchemist, who came strolling along. We told him all that had happened. "Alas! the gold chalice is indeed turned into a mere dust by the chemical action of the sand, but, by my power I can restore it to its original

beauty. "O, please, sir, do it!" pleaded Miss Fairy. The kindly old man made presently a few strange mixtures of clay and by the blending of them, the chalice sprang into life as bright as ever. He handed it gently to Miss Fairy, who thanked him very sweetly. Then in her bewilderment forgetting to bid me adieu, she rose in the air and sailed away to the East, singing as she went: "Now we shall be free forever, free forever!"

To be sure we all are glad that the fairies are free from their thraldom. But, that is not exactly the point I wish to dwell upon. The feat of the old Alchemist excites my wonderment the more; I think all the wise men of the world who heard of what he did, nodded that it was indeed astonishing.

This feat, little friends, is a type of a truth that I would impress upon you with this story. Your frail bodies, having after death crumbled into dust and mingled with the earth, shall by the power of the Almighty Alchemist be called back to the freshness of their youth on the great day of reckoning, and more wonderful than the fairies' flight over the sea shall be their flight, united to their souls,—into eternity.

Your bodies, little friends, will not descend into the bosom of the earth to remain there as a stone would. No, they will rise again

at the last day and be reunited to the soul. You give your assent to this truth, when in the Creed you say, "I believe in the resurrection of the body." It matters not where those bodies shall then be crumbling. Be they in the depths of the sea or in the mountain side, at the sound of the angel's trumpet they shall all arise incorruptible.

O, my little friends! on that final day, I am sure you wish to arise with bodies brilliant and glorified. Then if that be your desire, you must now keep your bodies and your souls free from the taint of sin. For, as the body is on earth the partaker with the soul in its good or evil deeds, so shall it be for all eternity, a sharer in its glory or in its dishonor.

Some one asked St. Paul one day—perhaps it was a child, I know not for certain,—how it could be that the dead could rise again, and with what manner of bodies they would rise. He answered them by a beautiful comparison. "My little friends," he said, "you all know what a grain of wheat is." I think just then he was passing a wheat field. They said yes they did. "Well," said he, that little speck is buried in the ground in the soft springtime just as if it were a tiny corpse. Then the heavens shed on it their gentle mists like fairy tears. The

sun throws its warm rays about it. Quite a pretty ceremony, if you please, goes with the burial of the small wheat grain. Then after its quiet sleep for weeks, it begins to rise out of its tomb, throws aside its earthly garb and lifts its graceful form above the ground. It was buried, but, it rose again with greater grace and comeliness than was dreamed of. "So also," said St. Paul, smiling at his young friends, "shall the resurrection of your bodies be. They are sown natural bodies, mere seeds. They shall rise spiritual bodies, beautiful and adorned. They are sown in weakness. They shall rise in power."

I think St. Paul must have said many sweet things on this subject that we do not find in his Epistle. I can picture him saying to his children, as he fondly drew them to him, "O, my little friends! What sort of a rising is yours going to be? I trust you are going to keep your bodies pure and untarnished by sin, so that when you blossom forth beyond the grave there will be a blossoming filled with buds, pleasing in odor to your Divine Lord. Truly then death is no longer the dark dismal passage you thought it heretofore. Standing on the very brink of Eternity, can you sing rejoicing, "O grave, where is thy victory? Death, where is thy sting?"

In those blessed days when your Lord walked upon this earth, a ruler name Jairus lived. He had a daughter whom he dearly loved, she grew very ill one day and the father became alarmed. He hastened over the fields to where Our Blessed Lord was speaking with the disciples of John. "O Master," he moaned, "my daughter is even now dead, but, come lay thy hand on her, and she shall live." Jesus, ever good of heart, went, and when He had entered into the house, He heard sad music and weeping. Looking with pity on the face of the dead maiden, He said, "Give place! The girl is not dead but sleepeth." Then some of the wicked ones laughed Him to scorn. He took the maiden by the hand, however, and she opened awide her eyes as though she had been raised from slumber; I suppose her father kissed her for joy. This, little friends, is but a type of our own awakening from the slumber of death, when the angel shall summon us with his trumpet, and we shall meet in gladness those from whom we parted in tears.

There once lived two pretty little girls. Through all the sweet days of childhood they were boon companions. One evening the smaller of the two stood sadly by the gateway and said to her playmate. "I am called

away for a while, dearest! But, I will come back to you again, nor love you any the less. The months wore wearily on. The young traveler at length returned; but, when the waiting friend saw her she screamed aloud in terror. "O, my friend, you are frightfully changed, what has befallen you, where is your former beauty?"

"O," said the stricken one, "be not so loath to come to me, I am distorted with a deadly malady. But, remember you pledged yourself to be my companion, you shall not shun me because of my defilement." I rather think the untainted child did scamper away. This, little friends, prefigures the meeting of the sin-laden soul and the body on Judgment day, after centuries mayhaps of separation. Not through days, but through endless ages shall they live on in their painful union, therefore, little friends, use the powers of your bodies and faculties of your souls according to God's holy law. For just as surely as the sun shall rise on the morrow from the glory of the East, just so shall your bodies rise from the dampness of the grave. Ever keep in mind this thought: Every action I perform now, be it good or evil, will influence my condition of life in eternity.

I can remember as a little child standing

by the edge of a tranquil pool, I picked up a pebble and threw it into the center of that pool. Instantly there began to ripple, from that point, tiny waves, nor did they cease expanding their circumference until they had touched the opposite bank far, far away. I have since thought, as I ever will, that the effect of our simplest actions do not cease with time, but go beyond, across the waters of life and touch the shores of eternity.

The Goose and the Casket.

THE SOUL'S AND THE BODY'S INTERESTS.

I WISH the times would return when birds and beasts could chatter and talk as we do now. It is long since they possessed this faculty. Many hundreds of years, I think. My! what merry times for little folks those must have been, when there was one common language for all pets and their little masters. When a cat or a dog could say funny things instead of mewing or barking. But alas! let us not sigh for the impossible, I guess those days will never come again. The reason I know they won't is this :—

A very old goose, the only one, in fact, in the whole world who retained the power of human speech from the days of yore, told me the following yarn, which of course I believe without reserve. Why shouldn't I believe a goose?

I was hurrying along a country lane one day on my way to school when I stopped for an instant to pick up a few little apples that in a sleepy moment had tumbled from their cradles. When by the picket gate I looked

askance, and I shivered as a big goose stood gaping at me. I had to laugh, however, at his apparent giddiness. This seemed to hurt his feelings. "Know you, stranger," quoth he with a trace of ire in his words, that geese and ganders did not always occupy so lowly a place in the animal world as now falls to our lot. Nor was our name always a by-word for silliness as it is now."

As I sat, I forgot all about school. "You are too young to know," he went on in a paternal way, "but nigh five hundred years ago, a rich monarch of a far-off land, whose duty it was to govern, not men, but birds and fishes, declared that he was going to hold on a certain day, what he pleased to term, 'A Carnival of Wisdom.'

"You, being a schoolboy, know what wisdom is." "Oh! sure," said I. "Teacher says I am too wise now." "Well," continued the old goose, "a royal summons was sent broadcast through the land, calling all the members of the bird family to the funny test. There came thousands of birds of fine plumage and weird names from every point of the compass. Now mind you," said the old gossiper again, to remind me of his lost prestige, "the goose at that time was held to be the wisest of birds." "Oh! sakes! I can't believe it," I said.

"Well, wait," he drolled. "When the vast concourse had quieted in the valley of Kazoozalum the pompous ruler came along on the back of a dragon. He held in one hand a treasure box, made from the purest gold, and studded with costly jewels that made every one blink. In this box, so the monarch declared, were hidden the gems of immortality. You know what that means?" queried the goose. I told him I thought I did. "In the other he held," continued my visitor, "the prettiest casket I ever saw. It was richly colored and from it a sweet smell kept coming out. It was made of clay. 'This, said the lordly old man, 'is the casket of immortality and passing joy.'

"Oh! joy!" I sighed. "'Which would you choose as your life's possession?' said he, as he drew up in front of each of his subjects. Without a single exception all the other birds chose the casket of gold. This I thought queer. When the monarch stopped before me, and sought of me my liking, I could not hide my admiration for the casket of clay. As I thought, so did I speak.

"'The latter, your majesty, do we the geese and ganders of your kingdom choose as the more precious treasure, for it is certainly more beautiful and pleasing to the eye.'

"The king bowing and smiling with a sinis-

ter smile approached and gave me the casket of clay, which I had scarcely grasped when I let it fall. It shattered into a thousand fragments. At this mishap the entire concourse loudly laughed. A howling wind came along just then and swept the pieces into the valley. A scowl now crept over the king's face and he thundered. 'It is as I thought. I have but one set of fools in all my domain. Anyone who would prefer moldering clay to purest gold is indeed wanting in good sense.' We were then branded as brainless creatures, and were ordered to fly from the valley of Kazoozalum. This we did in disgrace. We landed after hours of flight on the plains of Babylon. I have heard," said the goose pensively, "that since that time, the word goose is applied to human beings who show a want of brains. Is it so?"

I said, "You are quite right, Mr. Goose, it is so."

He now said no more but waddled away, and in a very saucy manner wagged his tail at me. I could not help thinking that he and his companions richly deserved his title, for being so silly as to choose the frail earthen vessel to one of lasting gold.

You see now, that the word foolish was coined just to fit a goose. What puzzles me then is, why do teachers and such wise

people sometimes call it to little folks? It must be that these latter act as geese and ganders acted of old. I guess that is the reason. But when has a boy or even a girl ever made a choice so unwise as the goose made? They make such a choice as often as they take for the object of their care and life's solicitude, the clay caskets of the body and overlook the gold caskets of the soul. One will soon crumble away as the box did when the goose took it into his bill. The other will be more lasting than the gold box, which the wise birds chose as their portion.

Now let us look at the question fairly.

Let us consider what the body is, its use, its life, its destiny. And then let us recall what the soul is, the duration of its life through eternity. The great Monarch, Almighty God, has fashioned your tender little bodies from the clay of the earth. He gave them certain graces, of course, greater than any sculptor could have done. In fact, any one of your bodies is a marvel so wonderful that no human power can imitate it. Year by year, those little bodies grow and become more graceful, as though they were so many flowers. But then, too, as the flowers, at the close of a few years, they begin to lose their grace and freshness, they droop and die.

Ah! yes, and die. And what is more, they mingle with the dust, whence first they were taken.

Note the resemblance to the clay casket in all these things.

Now, little friends, the soul is the casket of untainted gold, studded with the glistening jewels of God's gifts. Is it more precious than the body? Oh, yes, and infinitely more so, for its price is the sufferings, sighs, and death of your Saviour. Will it crumble and decay with the body? No! no! The poor little body will have lain centuries in the tomb, when even the stone above it shall have tottered and fallen. The soul will still be living on with the eternal vigor of youth, happy, too, in the union with God, I hope. Thus, you see, how manifold are the reasons why your souls should claim more care than your bodies. Let me here apply these remarks to your own little selves.

Heretofore which interests have usurped the greater number of your moments; those of your soul or those of your body? To be truthful, you will say with regret that your bodies have been the greater objects of your care. Every little ache or pain that annoyed them you tried instantly to take away. You fed them, and washed them, and adorned them with untiring regularity. You clothed

them gracefully, and rested them when they grew faint. I hear the gentle voice of complaint coming from your soul now.

"Indeed," it murmurs, "no such gentle care was shown to me! For days did I languish, thirsting and hungering for the food of prayer, and none was given to me. My lips burned to taste the sweet waters of the sacraments, and these were withheld from me. I yearned to fly heavenward and my wings were pinioned. Oh! no, I have not been dealt fairly with, by my little master." I hope that not many of you can say that you have been guilty of these neglects, little friends; your soul is everything to you, your body is nothing. If you have ever gazed upon a body from which the soul has taken flight, I am sure you would act more wisely.

See the eyes that once sparkled with gladness, now sightless and sunken. See the lips that a few days before gave voice to cheery words, now being slowly eaten away by worms. See the little hands that busied themselves in so many frivolous things, falling into decay. Above all, see the heart that throbbed with warm pulses, now still and cold.

Through just such a process, will those little bodies pass that you now so pamper. Therefore live not for their ease alone but make them always the servants to the interest

of your soul. Our dear Lord in speaking to a number of His young followers on the interests of the soul, once said, "Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air: for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. Now if your Father in heaven so clothes the grass of the field, which is to day, and to morrow is cast into the oven, how much more will He care for you, O ye of little faith! Be not anxious therefore, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? for the heathen seek after all these things. Seek ye therefore, first, the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."

I think this is one of the nicest talks our Saviour ever gave. Do try, little friends, to live up to the lesson He teaches.

I once knew a little Cuban boy who in all his life had never seen snow. One winter day, as he came on a visit to this country,

snow covered the ground with its dazzling whiteness. "What a beautiful thing snow is!" With his little fat hands he molded a ball and said, "I will send it to my mother." But the sun then came out and in a few minutes chased the snow away. So, little friends, will your bodies pass away, on the bosom of Mother Earth.

In conclusion then, ask yourselves each night, as you look back over the plain of the day, What have I done in the past hours for my soul, and what for my body? If you find that your selfish bodies have received too much attention, and your souls very little, or none at all, then resolve to be fair. Perform some little spiritual act, so that the two little striving forces may at least be abreast in the race.

Proserpina's Peril.

PRAYER.

Poor Proserpina! Her history is such a touching story, that I almost feel inclined not to tell it to you, my little friends. When I reflect, however, that its recital may be of benefit to your sinless souls, I am led to tell you all about her most willingly.

They say she was the gentlest, comeliest child that ever lived. But I can scarcely admit this. Anyhow, she was the pet of her mother, Ceres. Together they dwelt on an island that slumbered on the bosom of the sea. Proserpina at first had no playmates, for no other mortal lived within one hundred leagues of her. When she blossomed into girlhood, she grew lonely, and said she to herself, "I will make friends with the naiads of the sea, those grateful little darlings that know no care; for companions I must have."

So one day she put on her bonnet made of poppies, and strolled down to the golden sands, where the sea nymphs were at play. They gave her a welcome that gladdened

her poor little heart. They had brought with them a great many beautiful shells, and sitting down on the moist sand where the surf waves broke over them, they busied themselves in making a necklace. This they hung around Proserpina's neck. Her wondering eyes glistened with gratitude, so they did, and curling up her little lips, she kissed the one nearest her and said, "I love you and your sisters too. I could live with you always." "O, that would be delightful!" they all answered.

Just then the wavelets that had hitherto been dancing in merriment and throwing their silver spray to the sunlight, suddenly grew calm as though affected by a spell. The tallest of the naiads and presumably their queen, began now to sing. The first few notes were glad but, as the song went on, there seemed a wicked foreboding in her strain.

"O, see!" cried Proserpina, as her eyes caught something coming over the crests. Now what she beheld would excite the awe of any child. Six white steeds drawing a shell chariot came galloping toward the shore. In the chariot holding the reins, stood an aged man and Proserpina overheard his name. It was King Pluto. Before the wondering little maiden could say another

word, she was lifted into the chariot by a satellite. With the naiads swimming about her and laughing in glee, the steeds set off to sea. I know not why it was, but Proserpina's smiles turned quickly into tears. She felt perhaps, the forebodings of danger; neither were her feelings amiss, for without warning, these steeds darted beneath the waves. They soon galloped to the mossy bottom. More affrighted than ever did Proserpina become when on looking down, she beheld that she had been transformed into a sea naiad too.

Meanwhile Ceres, working in the fields, heard the faint echo of a syren song, like a winter wind moaning through the dead trees. Straightway did it occur to her that, perchance, harm had befallen her darling. The thought now flashed into her mind: There is one person who must have seen Proserpina and who can tell me, doubtless, what fate has come upon her. So she ran to the bower of Phœbus wherein sunshine and gladness ever play. "O Phœbus," exclaimed she, "see my distress! Tell me what has become of Proserpina, my child!" Phœbus who, of course, knew all happenings, then began to relate to Ceres the doleful tale. "Why!" said Phœbus, and as he spoke he kept touching his lyre so as to make a thread

of music run in and out amongst his words, "she has been taken away to the cave of the naiads, over which Pluto holds sway."

"O good Phœbus," tearfully besought the mother, "will she never return to me?" "O yes," said Phœbus with calmness, "although she is changed into a real sea nymph, I remember that yesterday I gave the little runaway a pomegranate. I recall she did not eat it. If she still has this with her, she can be freed. If she should open that fruit and take therefrom a seed, she will instantly render powerless the charms of the naiads, and even of Pluto himself."

"O Heaven, direct her to do so!" prayed Ceres. She now ran to the shore where the waves lashed in fury the insensible rock, and called out to Proserpina what Phœbus had spoken. I can hardly believe that Proserpina heard the mother's voice, yet, wonderful to relate, the waves tempered their maddened motion and a calm came.

A few moments passed, and Ceres espied a pearly shell guarded by angels skimming over the waters to her. Sure as life! Proserpina reclined within it. Phœbus meanwhile stood within the door of his bower singing a psalm of joy. "O, blessed the seed that delivered me from lasting imprisonment!" said Proserpina. Fondly did

Ceres fold her long-lost child in her arms and Proserpina was evermore happy.

There is an incident in this story I have, through fear, withheld from every one heretofore. To you, however, I will tell it, for you are my little friends:—After Ceres and Proserpina had gone rejoicing to the bower of Phœbus, one of the angels who guided the shell, tarried on the shore and began to talk to me. His voice was sweeter than music. "What has just happened you think is wonderful, don't you?" he queried of me.

"O, it is quite so, good angel," said I, bowing low as one should to a heavenly messenger. "Well," said he, "I don't mind telling you, but the pomegranate seed that Phœbus gave to Proserpina had nothing to to do with her delivery from the cave of Pluto." "No?" said I, really astonished. "No!" answered the angel, "the truth is: Proserpina is a little Christian at heart."

"Full many a time as she sat by the sea-side in in her loneliness, I came to her and kept her company and unfolded to her the beauty of Christian truths, just as a mother would unfold the petals of a blushing flower to her child. As time wore on, she grew to love the mysteries of the Faith and so I baptized her with the waters of the rill. That happened yester-morn. I impressed

on her the necessity of prayer particularly in the moment of danger, either spiritual or corporal. When the naiads beguiled her to the chariot of Pluto, the little dear began instantly to pray. The good Lord sent me to deliver her from her peril. I came and did so. Mind you, the pomegranate seed had, nothing to do with it." "O, I believe you, good angel," I said, without reserve.

The heavenly spirit now lowered his voice and drawing close to me whispered, "This is a lesson for a careless little boy. When the devil would carry you away into his dominions, you must pray with the fervor that Proserpina did. The Lord of heaven will straightway send His spirits to aid you."

"O how wonderful a thing prayer is!" I sighed. "Truly so," said the angel. All the while the angel tarried, I had kept my eyes upon the ground, knowing that I was not good enough to behold an angel's face. Now I lifted my eyes but the angel had gone. "Well, I am glad," said I, "that I know the truth, because Phœbus is proud and I will humiliate him by telling the world that his pomegranate seed had nought to do with Proserpina's delivery."

You little tots have already heard more about prayer from your parents and teachers than ever one like me could tell you. How-

ever, as I am a priest, may be I can put into your little "noddles" a few thoughts that your other friends may have overlooked. You must know that it is by prayer that Almighty God wishes you to praise Him, and in prayer, you must couch your words of love to Him. It is by prayer that you are to obtain the daily ration of grace that is essential to the life of your souls. As food is to your bodies, so is prayer to your souls. You would not think of letting days go by without partaking of food, so should you be loath to let your souls remain deprived of their essential nourishment.

I am sure that no child with a kind heart would dream of keeping his little pet bird wanting for seed for a long while. Yet I fear your little pet souls, caged up in a mortal body, are often left to languish for need of heavenly food through your carelessness.

It is really hard to fathom why some little folks are so prone to neglect prayer, particularly when you have grasped what it is. It is a privilege of speaking with the King and Lord of all creation, with Him who holds in His hands, the power to grant every favor for which the human heart can sigh. O children! do not become careless at any period of your lives in this holy practise of prayer, for when all the friends of youth

have passed away or have proved faithless with time, your Lord will stand then as ever, your truest confidant, whispering gently the same old words, "Come to me, all ye who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will refresh you."

What will my Lord give me if I pray? Anything that is good for your soul. How can I get the graces I need? By simply asking for them with faith and perseverance.

One day a little boy, whose name I shall withhold, stood in front of a fruit-store. He looked wistfully at the shiny-cheeked apples and the tiny grapes that rubbed their noses together and whispered funny things to one another. A lazy breeze came sauntering along, caught up the generous fragrance and wafted it into the sunburnt face of my young friend. The little loiterer sighed as he filled his lungs with the sweetened air: "O how I would love to taste some of that fruit!"

"Tell me, good chap, which of these fruits you desire," said an old man who had heard all, for I own the fruit-stand." What think you the foolish lad did? He glanced into the generous old face for a moment, then walked away without making known his wish. Now, even you will agree that little lads can sometimes do foolish things.

Your Gentle Lord, the Dispenser of all good things, invites you—his little friends—into His fruit-store and asks you: "What fruit, what grace do you want, my child?" To His generous offer, alas! you ofttimes make no reply, but walk away as did the lad with the sunburnt cheeks.

All the little saints now in heaven were children of fervent prayer while they tarried here. So must you be, lest you will falter on the way heavenward and be lost. Frequent prayers will keep you in friendly touch with Jesus. It will lighten your hearts and strengthen your souls from temptation. "Watch and pray, lest you fall into temptation," were the words that Jesus spoke to his disciples on the night of His agony in Gethsemane. The same He calls out to you to-day from His little "House of Love."

Proserpina's rescue from the caverns of the sea by the power of her prayers is only a type of your delivery from the allurements of the tempter that are sure to encompass you when your little hearts grow older and childhood shall be to you as a half-forgotten dream.

Tommy Tod and the Lotus Tree.

DECEITFULNESS OF SIN.

So long ago, I cannot recall the place, there lived a King. I am pleased to say, that unlike most Kings, this one was unselfish and kind. The proof that he possessed these qualities of heart is, that he took unto himself as his own, a little orphan lad named Tommy Tod. They lived together in a palace, the like of which has never been equaled before, or since, for, betimes it floated through the air, then rested in the mountain, just as the King wished. Tommy had everything a boy's heart could wish for, and that is saying much indeed. So, naturally, he was as happy as could be.

It was the little fellow's wont to rise at dawn, and then go down to the shore and chatter to the waves as they came rollicking in upon the white sand, whispering something to Tommy that neither you, nor I could ever understand. Having unburdened their sweet little secrets, they would steal away, modestly drawing their flimsy white tresses after them. Tommy would laugh aloud at this, and run toward them, as though to

catch them. Now do you suppose that this royal youngster went to the shore each morning solely to tease the waves ? No indeed, my little friends ! The real purpose was to gather the tiny pearls that pushed their glittering heads above the sands, just to flirt with Tommy I suppose. However, it would not be policy to let the waves know this, or else I think a jealousy might arise.

However, as he stood one morning watching the ocean heave and swell, as though it was sighing over something. Tommy beheld a speck on the horizon, it grew and grew like magic, until he danced with glee and shouted, "'Tis the King's vessel veering homeward from the Utopian Isle. O, what a thrilling tale the sailors will have to tell !" I never heard of a ship sailing so fast, for ere the boy finished his words, the vessel was being moored to the quay. He had thought aright, a merry tale did the jolly tars have to tell him.

"O Tommy !" said one, on that isle there is a lotus tree, the fruit of which will bring you endless joy." But," said the jolly tar with a wink, one taste of that fruit will cost a thousand pearls—'Tis not for mortals poor as we." "Ah, what care I replied the favored lad, a thousand pearls have I and more, and so I will sip the magic sweetness.

A snow-white swan that had been snoozing on the water now moved toward Tommy. You must know that swans, in those days, were very very large.

The boy leaped upon his feathery back, and my! how it skimmed over the sea. It flew betimes, then swam, and so the youngster had a variety on his trip. Many hours slipped by when in truth they seemed but moments.

"O, see!" at length cried the young voyager pulling tight the golden cords that guided the swan. "There is the isle of Utopia." The swan then said something cross, but I could not quite catch what it was.

"What ugly faces you have," said Tommy, as he stood before the "Chief Mogul" of the Isle—I think it was imprudent for him to speak, but forsooth he was very haughty. "You would eat of the lotus tree?" queried the Chief grinning hideously. "Yes," replied Tommy like a man, "and here are my thousand pearls." At this a fair damsel, that he had not heretofore noticed, proffered him the fruit, Tommy's jeweled hand grasped it eagerly. He tasted it, it was in very fact delicious. Its flavor permeated every fiber of his being; he whacked his hands on his knees. He laughed and sang,

he knew not why. Now he reclined upon a bright cloud that exhaled perfume. It embraced him and bore him away into space. "The lotus fruit is sweeter than they said," thought he. Gradually the cloud faded from him, it let him fall from its soft touch. He now heard the lashing waves, and the winds shrieking through the giant rocks. He stood, and pressed his brain. "O God! where am I?" he cried, as a cold breath swept across his brow. Harsh laughter from many voices was the only answer to his cry of anguish.

Everything was folded in a Stygian darkness, he thought he heard the bell in his castle tower and the whispering of his pet waves, but no! "I see it all," he moaned at last. "I have given up my pearls for a taste of the lotus fruit!" O fool that I am! I have left my home, my good master the King, and for what?—here his voice was lowered into an indistinct whisper, "I know death will soon take me. I feel his icy hand now falling on my eyes. I am dying!"

In the dawn, the lifeless form of a fair youth rested on the sorrowing waters. The features were as of one asleep. Guided as if by the breath of a spirit, the tide bore its burden past the shores of the King's castle. The birds were singing as was their wont,

the bell tolled, but its notes were sad. The waves ran playing upon the sloping sand in quest of Tommy as of yore. Though they knew it not, he was to greet them no more. He had tasted of the lotus tree.

Believe me, little friends, although I wrote this quaint tale for you, I did not savor the task, for it is too sad; but then I reflect, it tells the lesson of sin, and sin is always sad. It is deceitful, too, and cruel, and this is the point I would drive home. The misery and ruin it brings upon guileless souls is far worse than that which befell poor Tommy Tod. Almighty God has created you little folks to be happy, not alone hereafter, eternally, but here also in this life. A little grief must blend into your years, now and then, but like the little headache, that has visited you already, it will soon pass away, and you will be soothed again, and happy; but the gloom that follows mortal sin is blacker, and more bitter than any other, because, it rankles in the soul, and conscience, and not alone in the heart. You will see the weight of my words later on in life, clearer than you do now, little friends; for as yet you have not strayed very far away from the loving Saviour, nor crept away beyond the zone for His sweet call.

My words, then, are a gentle warning, for

many years cannot pass along before the same enticements will be laid before you, that coaxed poor Tommy Tod into ruin. The tempter will steal to you, as you play beneath the shadows of your Father's castle, and point out to you the luxury of the "Utopian Isle" of sin; but beware, little chums; be not deceived. Get real stern and say to your seducer: Begone! Tell me no more of your "isle of delights" I prize the pearls of grace, given me by the Master, too sacred to throw them away for the mere taste of a fruit, that intoxicates for the moment, but then deals destruction and death.

Sometimes I think there is no one in the world better fitted to see that real deceitfulness of sin, than your spiritual Father. As he sits in the confessional and bows his head to catch the tales of sin, the sacred stillness, is now and then broken by gentle sobs and sighs, that tell only too well, that another heart has been torn, another soul has been led away from the "Castle of Peace." And hour after hour, like the interminable falling of waves upon the shore, come the self-same laments, "O Father! my sin has given me no pleasure. It took me away from Jesus. Since then I have pined, I have suffered in the darkness, but now, I have come home again by the light of grace."

Now, young friends, I want to put this question before you, "What does the foolish little sinner gain and what does he lose by mortal sin?" Well, he gains, if you may so term it, a fleeting moment of pleasure, and, let me see; do you know, I cannot recall any other advantage sin has.

What does the little sinner lose? Ah! now I can assure you, many priceless goods, —First, Peace of Heart, goes away with sin, no one can do what is wrong and be happy —Divine grace too is driven out—that sweet life of the soul; you thrust from you by sinning, the gentle hand of your Lord, who has guided you past many a dangerous chasm. By sinning mortally you harden your little hearts, you deprive them of the dew of Grace; they dry up, and become callous, so that they are no more prone to love the Master, or any of the little things about His House.

Alas! it has been said that a child whose heart has been toughened by mortal sin, can look upon the face of a mother still in death, and feel no pang of sorrow, nor shed one sacred tear; I cannot see how this can be, I doubt it for one, nor blush to do so; I feel, children, that if but one moment separated me from eternity, I would use that moment in calling to you to beware of the deceitful-

ness of mortal sin, in printing on your unstained hearts with letters of fire the words, "Sin is a vile deceiver."

In your Bible history you may read the story of Jonathan, son of Saul. He lamented that he should be condemned to death for the mere tasting of a drop of honey. "Alas! he moaned, I did but sip of a little honey and lo! I must die."

His cry has echoed through the centuries, and many a young heart has, through the years, unfettered the same sigh. I know a bright little chap who calls sin April fool candy, I know why too, but I won't tell, you must guess that riddle yourselves.

O boys and girls! if I succeed in making one soul here, more cautious in future against the enticings of sin, I will hold myself paid for my task. If I prevent but two little feet from being led astray by the gaudy pageantry of sin, I will be happy. If my poor words will dry one tiny tear that glistens on the cheek of some penitent, I will not have written in vain.

Not many of my little friends, but perhaps a few have already caught the first sound of the tempting whisper that comes across the waters from the "Utopian Isle" to come, taste of the lotus-tree of sin. If the voice has awakened you to curiosity just

run and bury your fevered faces in the folds of the mantle of Jesus. Cling to Him, He will fold you in His arms, as He smiles sweetly upon you, and keep all harm afar. The danger will soon pass, then you will look up into His face, and tell Him that you are His forever.

The Gallant Young Bard.

RESPECT FOR THE AGED.

The day of trial had at last begun to dawn. The morning air was filled with melody and song, as the young minstrels walked slowly along the lake-side toward the palace. Erin's gracious ruler had promised a crown of gold to the young bard who, on the royal birthday, should sing the most touching ballad. The couriers had made known the imperial wish many weeks before, and now, in obedience to the summons, the young songsters of Erin streamed through hill and dale toward the castle, their hearts throbbing the while with the hope of bearing away the prize. Bursts of song could be heard, now and then, echoing through the valleys.

Arrayed in his costliest robes, the King stood at the castle-gate to welcome his guests. A clear note from the clarion at length announced to all that the hour of trial had come. The King, attended by his courtiers and pages, strode with majestic step to his throne. The clamor of the many thousands that thronged the vast hall now ceased, as the passing of a storm. The still-

ness was intensified as His Majesty arose to speak, He had uttered but a few words when an angry look gleamed from his eye. He glanced toward the door and every one shuddered as he roared: "Madam, how dare you enter within and halt me as I speak!" pointing in scorn the while at an old woman who fell trembling at his feet. "My courtiers! Remove the woman at once," he cried. They sprang to effect his bidding.

"Hold, sirs!" cried a pleading voice, as a youth clad in white with cingle of gold, stood above the prostrate old creature. "Sire!" he cried, raising his hand to the King, "hear me as I speak." The softening of the King's countenance, however, was the only warrant he had to proceed. Standing erect, with his left hand resting upon his beloved harp, the stranger said: "Worthy Sire! My mother died when I was a mere babe. My father was stricken down whilst fighting under your standard. This old woman, then youthful and fair, pitied my loneliness and took me to her home. When grown to boyhood days, in gratitude, I would sing to her at eventide, for she loved my voice. Then she prophesied, "Some day you will sing before the King as a bard." For this honor, she prayed along the years.

Time came when I entered one of your

halls of minstrelsy. Through the eight long years of my study, her prayer mingled with my song. "God grant," she prayed, "that I shall not die till I see you an honored minstrel before the King," She has spent her life for me. The occasion she longed for is at hand. No, Sire! she shall not be driven from this hall else shall I go with her."

All the while the young singer spoke, kindlier feelings were softening the King's heart. "Enough," he cried at last, "your trusted friend, old and poor though she be, shall remain to listen to your song." The old woman raised not her trembling head but a little tear told that she was grateful.

The herald now came forward and called the names of those who were to contest for the royal favor. One after another did they mount the rostrum, and twang their clairseachs sweet of tone,as their voices strong and tuneful resounded through the vast enclosure. And the King was pleased.

Nine of the young bards had stood before him and told of Erin's glory in strife. Now all eyes were turned toward the rostrum, as the last contestant began his song. Unlike the rest, he was slender and timid. Unlike them too, he sang not of battle. His was a gentler theme. As he began soft and low, the murmur went the round, "He singeth a

Suan-tree, a slumber song." The old woman now lifted her head and her face gladdened with memories of times long past. She murmured as her dim eyes glistened, "'Tis the song he sang to me years ago at the door of the cabin." The voice rose gently, and fell again in soft cadence, and the beaming eyes of the youthful bard rested the while on his old guardian. There was something of unusual pathos in his tones, for the King lowered his head upon his bosom and seemed much affected. Softer and softer, as the dying of day, the young minstrel closed his song. The last note lingered in the hearts of all. When he seated himself, no shout of applause rent the air, but a sigh of satisfaction which told that the hearts of all had been touched, breathed about him.

The stately old monarch now arose. "My people," said he, "your souls and mine have been soothed by a melody of heaven. There can be no doubt, the crown shall be given to the gallant young bard." The old woman, trembling with emotion, now came forth and kissed the saintly lips of him who had sung so tenderly. As the concourse swept from the hall at the beckon of the King, this prayer lingered, "God is with the young bard, for he hath respect for the aged."

Do you know, little friends, my heart beats quicker and my cheeks burn with a strange pride when I think of the chivalrous deed of that young bard. When I recall, too, that many of us are children of that same race whose glories he sang so sweetly. Yes, the ages separate us, still do we feel bound to him by the ties of love.

I am sure you will agree with me that a crown of gold, was a gift none too good for the gallant young minstrel. His deed of defending the poor old woman was one that deserves to be written in letters of gold on the pages of history, although I have never seen it there. But the recording angel has account of it, I have no doubt.

It may not be amiss for me here, children, to ask the question : Is your manner toward the aged ones whom you meet so frequently, thoughtful and kind? Do you respect them, and do you refrain from saying and doing things that might wound their feelings? Answer these questions truthfully.

You can take it as a principle, my young friends, that those children who show deference for the aged are gifted with good hearts, and noble impulses of soul. There is a sweet train of memories thrown about an aged one that is really sacred to any good boy or girl.

As you, with eyes bright and features still

fresh in youth, look into the face of an aged person, you, no doubt, feel that you are standing in the presence of one whom God wishes you to respect. Here you are, just beginning the battle of life. There stands one who is about to lay down its burdens, and cease from the struggle,—one about whom the mists of evening are gently falling, and one, too, who perhaps will receive from the Master's lips the gentle approval, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Ah! little friends, a rude mannered child, little realizes what he does when he shows disrespect to an aged person. Time was, when those dim eyes sparkled with merriment just as yours do now. Time was, when that weak, untuneful voice was lifted in shouts of childish glee. Time was, too, when that faltering step was lithe and quick, in the games that now so delight your hearts. But the years have rolled on over that hoary old head, singing now a gladsome melody, now, a dirge of sorrow, in the flight. Behind those failing eyes, however, there is a memory that could unfold, perhaps, deeds of heroism and self-denial for others that would make you burn with shame. Here is another thought, mark it well: Old age holds a claim on your reverence for this reason: Of itself, it tells as a rule that the years now

passed and gone were spent in God's service, or at least in obedience to His holy law. For only to those who have been virtuous, or at least temperate in all things, has been given the stamina to reach old age.

An aged King used to tell the children of his domain that they would be treated in their old age just as they then respected their elders. I do not doubt there was much truth in his warning. This same old ruler would have it that there was an element of a hero in every boy. I was prone to doubt this myself until I came across the following immortal poem. Then I said to myself, "The king was right. A boy can truly be a hero."

The woman was old and ragged and gray
And bent with the chill of the winter's day ;
The street was wet with a recent snow,
And the woman's feet were aged and slow.
She stood at the crossing and waited long
Alone, uncared for amid the throng
Of human beings who passed her by,
Nor heeded the glance of an anxious eye.

Down in the street, with laughter and shout,
Glad in the freedom of "school let out"
Came the boys, like a flock of sheep,
Hailing the snow piled white and deep.
Past the woman so old and gray
Hastened the children on their way,
Nor offered a helping hand to her,
So meek, so timid, afraid to stir
Lest the carriage wheels or the horses' feet
Should crush her down in the slippery street.

At last came one of the merry troop,
The gayest laddie of all the group ;
He paused beside her and whispered low,
" I'll help you across if you wish to go."
Her aged hand on his strong young arm
She placed, and so without hurt or harm,
He guided the trembling feet along,
Proud that his own were firm and strong.

And back to his gay young friends he went,
His young heart happy and well content.
" She is somebody's mother, boys, you know,
For all she's aged and poor and slow,
And I hope some fellow will lend a hand
To help my mother, you understand,
If ever she's poor and old and gray
When her own dear boy is far away."
And somebody's mother bowed low her head
In her room that night, and the prayer she said
Was : " God be kind to the noble boy
Who is somebody's son, and pride and joy."

Yes, such a little fellow you, too, young friends, will consider a pride and a joy to any mother. And yet the distinction is within the grasp of every one of you.

They tell me this little nobleman grew up to be a great and gallant soldier, beloved by all. That is easy, however, to fathom, for as a lad he was great and gallant, and " the boy is father to the man."

In your Bible-histories, you will read how some wicked children one day laughed to scorn an old man as he went into a wilderness to pray. By a hidden power he called

from the dense forest some bloodthirsty bears. These rushed madly at the foolish children and soon tore them to pieces.

I really feel sorry for these children whenever I read of their untimely ending. I am impressed, too, more and more with the thought;—how displeasing to God must be the sin of disrespect when He would mete out such a fearful punishment for its commission.

I know very well, little friends, that none of you ever wilfully wound the feelings of the aged by any positive act. However, to make the idea more impressive, consider what will be said to the unruly child on Judgment-day when Christ shall say: "You beheld me old and feeble and you scorned me." In surprise, the wicked soul shall say "When, Lord, did I behold Thee old and feeble and revile Thee?" Then will He say, "As often as you did it to the least of My brethren, you did it to Me."

I shudder to finish the sentence he will then pronounce. So, now, you little folks, always be on the alert to aid the enfeebled and treat them kindly. Those fainting old hearts will beat in gratitude to you, and those lips will bless you, and there is much indeed in the blessing of the aged.

Vis, the Goblin.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

In olden times when bonnins drank wine and fishes could fly as well as swim, there lived in a woods many leagues away, a band of rascally goblins. They were the queerest little men ever known, so I read in a musty tome. They never slept,—for then, so the tome stated, there was no night and the sun never went down, except now and then, to slake his thirst. A serious thought never lurked in the silly heads of the tiny brown men. "For," said they, "life is one long play-day;" just as many of you little folks think to-day.

Well, now, although I have called these frivolous chaps silly, I will make one exception. There lived in the camp, the old goblin doctor. He wore golden specks and a long beard flowed from his chin. Therefore, he must have been learned and sensible. I am, perhaps, the only visitor from the outer world who was ever admitted into the goblins' camp. Thus I am enabled to tell you one of these happenings.

On this particular day of my visit, the old doctor seemed much disturbed in mind. He kept muttering the same thing over and over, as he stirred a huge caldron. But of course, I could not be expected to understand his jargon. At last, I heard a noise of hurried steps on the green sward. I turned quickly, and I beheld a hundred or more of these queer little hunters come racing toward their rude castle, like a lot of young hares. As they drew near, they laughed loud and long.

Presently, there came a stillness on them all, and I could see that their features had taken on a serious cast. One and all stood on tiptoe and craned their necks. At last, the young minstrel of the band, who carried a small harp, spoke out: "Doctor, I see you are mixing herbs. Pray, who amongst our brothers is sick?" he asked cautiously. "Ah! good brothers, sit ye down until I unravel my story, for my heart is sore indeed," sighed the old doctor.

As he spoke, every shaggy little head was bent in attention. "News most depressing I have to tell you," he began. "You remember how some months ago, your valiant brother, Vis, growing weary of a goblin's life and taking umbrage at my chiding, wandered over the mountain pass, vowing

never to set eyes on me again. I then shook my head and grinned with a doubting grin as I hailed "good-bye" to the poor stripling. I thought to see him return in a few hours the wiser of his folly, but no! I often sighed as you sang, good brothers, thinking over the fate that might befall him. One month yesterday marked the day of his going away.

A few hours ago, as I walked along the glen, I heard a sound of dismal moaning. I followed that sound. It led me to the mouth of a cavern. This did I enter, though it breathed out sickening odors. I crept cautiously along the wall to which there clung webs and moisture. At length, my foot struck something. I lit my torch. I looked down and there in the uncertain light, I beheld the form of our long-lost brother."

A sigh just here heaved from each little listener. "At first, he did not speak, but continued to moan and mumble. Falling on my knees, I peered into his stupid face. 'O brother! you are lying dazed in an awful den,' said I. 'The odors are heavy and insects eat into your skin.' He now raised his head feebly, yet a callous smile played on his face. 'I feel no insects, nor do I perceive any sores on my face,' he whimpered. 'I do not fathom why you call this place un-

clean. I have lived in it through a month. Still I feel no uneasiness.' This he said, sinking back into his stupor.

"Saying to myself, 'I cannot as your friend, see you imprison yourself in so foul a place,' I madly rushed out. I seized a huge boulder. This I hurled with all my might against the roof of the cave. I rent a hole many feet in width, my brothers. Instantly, the fresh sunlight pierced into the corners of the cave. This being done, I again darted into the unclean hole.

"Vis was now standing erect with his hand raised to his eyes to shield off the blinding light. 'O, what a filthy place!' he gasped, 'I have been dwelling in the house of death and knew it not. O, take me to a place of cleanliness and light,' he pleaded, kissing my hand. 'Heal me of my deformity.' As he bid me, so did I." And here the old doctor pushed aside a bough and disclosed poor Vis, lying wan and worn, on a couch.

As his happy comrades sprang to wish him a welcome home, he sighed again, "O brothers, I dwelt in darkness and knew it not." I have since heard that Vis is restored to his former comeliness.

If poor Vis were the only one who wandered into an unclean cave and grew numb to his surroundings, I would not mind it.

But alas! there are many who dwell in the cave of sin and seem unaware of their peril.

What I want to impress upon your minds, little friends, by this story, is the necessity of frequently looking into your consciences, lest you be dozing unwittingly in the gloom of sin. Don't let the tempter fool you into any cave wherein the sunlight of God's grace cannot gleam, and then make you believe that you are in no danger.

While it is a rare case with young folks, it does sometimes occur, that they will skip away into some bypath of sin as Vis did. The tempter in his cunning, leads them by smooth paths into darker recesses. Thier spiritual sense at length becomes used to the unclean surroundings. All the while, the sunlight of God's grace is shut out, then it is easy for the ulcers of sin to grow unobserved.

I have often seen a railroad engineer, looking carefully with a light into every nook and crevice of his steed of steel, to make sure that all the parts were clean and in smooth working order before he would start out on a long and rapid run over the rails.

Have you the same sense of diligence, my young friends, in examining the delicate workings of your souls, now and then? Do

you make sure that each night, ere you pass through the dark and uncertain tunnel of slumber, that your spiritual machinery, your conscience, is bright and clean of the soil of sin? Alas, should a wreck occur while you pass through that still and mysterious passage, should the icy hand of death stop the pulsings of your little hearts, would the All-seeing Judge be pleased with the condition of your souls? Reflect and answer to yourselves.

In another story somewhere in this book I have urged you to be more caring for the health of your soul than for that of your body. Yet I know that if you felt the slightest warning of sickness, you would run to the doctor and let him examine you, lest some dreaded disease steal in and take you away. Now I am sorry for your poor, little souls. They are not treated fairly. How often does the germ of sin lurk therein and endanger their precious life! Do you stop to examine the trouble? Do you hasten to the Physician of your soul and unburden your symptoms to Him? If not, you are unfair.

Particularly must you look into the nooks and crannies of your hearts, little friends, as you stand on the threshold of the confessional. Let there come from your souls the prayer of Bartemeus, the blind man, who yearned

for sight as he pleaded, "O Lord, that I may see."

So must your prayer be, "O Spirit of Light, show me wherein I have sinned. Reveal to me the enormity of my falls." Then the light of grace will throw its brilliancy about you, just as the sun shone into the cave as poor Vis stood in the midst of gloom and squalor. Then, like him, too, you will long for a place of cleanliness and light and that place, as you know, is within the zone of God's grace.

When I was a very small boy, the tinkling of a tiny bell tempted me to wander into a candy store. A kind face beamed on me over the shining case. "Madam," I queried as politely as I could, "what is that machine for on which the bell tinkles?" A pleasant smile now assured me that I was to be gently received, for the lady unfolded to me by actual demonstrating, the purpose of the wonder-box.

"This is a cash-register! See!" She laughed as she pressed a button and the bell tinkled. "At night," she went on, "whenever business is ended, I can tell on the moment what gain I have made through the day." "O, thank you," said I, walking away with a new thought in my little noddle, and a lump of candy pressed into my hand.

Since then my memory has often led me to that candy shop. Since then, too, I have thought what a good example cash registers set for little folks.

Can you, at nightfall, little friends, tell just what good or evil you have done during the day? I fear you cannot. Still, you carry about in your hearts a tiny mechanism as accurate and as retentive as any cash register. I used to wonder why men in large business houses would now and then, set up ever so late at night. I have seen them write and figure so far into the night that I felt sorry for them.

Why do they work so steadily and so untiringly? I know now! Because they expect that an account will be called for in a day or so, and they wish to have every detail correct.

You, little friends, are all bookkeepers. You have some very important accounts to settle with your Lord and Master. He has given you some affairs to see to, some goods of which you are but the stewards; you have some commands to obey, some counsels to carry out. How are you conducting that business? Like the merchant with the clerks, Christ will come, as He says, perhaps like a thief in the night, and demand an account of your stewardship. For, He will

then say, "You can be steward no longer." I hope you will not grow confused when the question is put to you.

O yes, children, examine your consciences frequently. Look over your spiritual affairs now and then. If you find you owe your Lord something, pay Him right away or at least, give Him a note of promise. That will be, as you may guess, a fervent act of contrition.

The Truant-Player.

HOW TO SPEND THE SUNDAY.

"Oh! how nice it is to lie here, stretched out on the green grass, to whisper little love-words to the flowers, and have them nod to you; to say little nothings to the crickets, just to tease them." So mused little curly-haired Teddy, the scamp of the village, as he rolled himself one morning under the brawny arms of a kindly old tree. On the moistened air there came to him the echoes of chimes ringing far away. Little by little, he seemed lulled asleep by the sweetness and quiet about him. If he had suddenly been snatched away into dreamland, of which he had read in the story-books, he could not have been more pleased.

After a time a soft music began to fill his soul. It came from a little bird that was swaying to and fro on a rosebush close by. "My! what a charming singer you are, my little pet," said the young chap. And, as though the bird had caught his meaning, it came closer and sang more sweetly than before, all the while pointing its head heavenward.

"How tame you are," said Teddy, reaching out his hand in an effort to caress it, but the timid little songster darted away over the hills and was seen no more. "Oh! sweet little thing," the lad sighed, "I am so sorry you have gone."

"Dear me! what a queer creature you are," now said Teddy with a squint of his face, "and what a horrid song you sing," as on a twig above him a locust began its deafening noise. "O, that is awful! I must run away," he said impatiently, jumping up and holding his fingers to his ears. "This is surely not singing," and so he trotted across the fields until he came to the edge of a sleeping green pond. Just then he heard a splashing noise. Looking down, he saw a bright green frog perched on a slimy stone. It looked wonderingly at the little boy and it seemed to say, "My young stranger, listen to my funny lay, you may like it." And so it began a croaking gurgle, at which Teddy had to smile.

The poor frog, seeming to know that its voice was being laughed at, suddenly stopped. "Now, isn't it queer," groaned Teddy, "every creature I have met this morning began to sing in its own way. I wonder why it is. O, Mr. Frog, if you could only talk I am sure you could tell me

the secret of all this joy this morning," said Teddy, pleadingly. "Why, I can talk," the frog replied, standing proudly on his hind legs. The lad's eyes opened very wide at this. "Tell me, then," said he, "Why do all you dwellers in this merry land seem so happy this morning?" "Listen, I will tell you," answered the frog.

"The Good Lord created birds and locusts and frogs, as He did little boys, for a purpose. That purpose, we think, is to praise and serve Him as we can. You give Him homage by prayer, by going to Devotions on Sunday." At this Teddy's heart gave a jump, for it was Sunday morning and even now he was playing truant from Mass.

"Hello! who is this coming along? I must swim away," said the frog as he dove into the water, leaving the boy standing bewildered on the bank. He heard the echo of a soft voice coming closer to him each moment. He looked about and saw approaching a little girl still younger than he. She was returning from Mass, humming as she moved along the hymn she had heard that morning. She was smiling too, and her face seemed to reflect the purity of her little heart. "Say, my little friend," said Teddy, calling loudly to her, "come here, I want to

speak to you." The young stranger came timidly over to him. "Solve this riddle for me," said the lad. "Every creature I have met this morning has begun to sing at sight of me. Is it because they are pleased to see me, do you think?" "No, surely that is not the reason," said the little maiden with a twinkle of the eye; "it is this, I really believe—this is God's day. Sunday, you know, is the day on which He especially wants our hearts for Himself. Perhaps, you have even heard the birds this morning singing, to make the heavens glad?" "O yes, I have," Teddy stammered out in a confused way.

"Well, so it is," continued the girl, "All creatures come from God. They belong to God and are destined for God, and to-day, He claims the homage of their souls." As the little lady finished speaking, she strode quietly away. Teddy stood with his hands in his pockets, looking into the ground. He was lost in thought. At last, a buzzing bee woke him from his reverie. He heaved a sigh and pointing to himself said, "Here is one of God's creatures whose voice is not joined in the chorus of praise to-day." I am ashamed to confess that a girl, and a bird, and a frog, could be devouter than I.

"Hark, the chimes are ringing. It is the 'Angelus.' It is too late now to trip off

to Mass. I will kneel here on the green grass amongst the flowers and tell Our Blessed Lord than I am sorry. I shall never miss Mass again."

Poor Teddy was not so bad a boy after all, for he grieved over his neglect and vowed to be a loyal little soldier in the future. Since Teddy's time, I have not met another little boy who knowingly absented himself from Mass, and I hope I never will. It is certainly quite humiliating for any boy to have a bird or frog tell him of his duty to his Lord.

Neither do I know a single boy, amongst all my little friends, who is possessed of a stingy disposition. Boys are usually open-hearted and generous to their companions. I must state here, however, against my will, that I have heard of a few who are mean to Our Good Lord. Let us see in what manner. This Heavenly Lord has given to His children six days out of the seven on which they may play and romp about. He asks the simple favor, "Give me," He says, "the whole of your minds and hearts on Sundays. Come to My Mansion at least for a half hour during the day. I have many good things I would give you." Yet, in face of all this sweet generosity, there are those who will listen to this loving call with cold indif-

ference and remain away from the "Feast of Love."

I tremble when I hear of a child neglecting to hear Mass on Sunday. It recalls to me a story Our Lord Himself tells. A king, he said, once prepared a sumptuous feast. He sent out his courtiers to call in all the children of the village, rich and poor alike. After a time the courtiers returned, and what think you they had to report to the King? "Your Majesty," said they, "of those whom we urged to attend, one and all gave an excuse and begged saying, "Pray, hold us excused."

The King then, just as you might suppose, grew angry at those ingrates. But out again did He send His courtiers. "Go into the lanes and bypaths," quoth He, "and bring in the very poor and blind and lame for I must see my banquet-hall filled." As he ordained, so did the courtiers, and ere they went, He spoke these memorable words: "I tell you that none of those who refused My invitation shall ever enter this banquet-hall." That night, so it is said, a fearful storm swept across the plains, and those who had been unwise were carried into darkness, nor were they seen again.

You, my little friends, are invited each Sunday to a Feast of Grace by heavenly

messengers. Be not so unthinking then as were the children of the parable and tarry away from that Feast, lest the storm of God's displeasure break over you and you be finally cast into exterior darkness.

Do you know I sometimes think that if there were a Heaven for the tiny birds, how few would fail to enter there. They never miss their service of song in the morning be the weather fair or stormy. This good word, I fear, cannot be said of many a child.

The moments of Mass-time are, forsooth, the most precious of the whole week. In that short space, your Best Friend sits enthroned with His heart burning with a desire to show His love for you, and with His hands laden with the most costly pearls of His grace. How wounded He must feel then, when any of His little favorites slights Him!

My little friends, you cannot go through the week of trial and temptation preserving your pearl of grace unless the hand of Your Saviour be laid on your heads in blessing on Sundays, just as He used to bless His Little Lovers" in the long ago, when they ran to meet Him on the hillsides of Judea. He loved the company of his little friends then as He does still. But the little friends, you see, are not nowadays as loyal as those of long ago.

Most of you have seen a battle-ship, I know. Did you observe with what power it dashes into the waves? It seems to fear nothing, as it tosses the white spray from its prow. Supposing, now, that it failed to stop in port every seven or eight days and take on a new supply of fuel, how helplessly it would at length be pitched about on the waves! So you, little battle-cruisers of Christ, cannot expect to sail many days through the maddened torrents of temptation unless you steer into, the port of Grace on Sundays, at least, and receive a new supply of spiritual fuel.

I intended to claim your attention a while longer by telling you a good method to assist at Mass, but all this I presume you know already. I will conclude, therefore, by telling you a tale of a little lad of Normandy. He was wont to sail miles across the waters to be present at Mass. O how devout he was! Daybreak scarcely came before he would be steering his little bark toward the Isle de Marie, whereon the pretty chapel of Notre Dame stood.

With tears of joy, he knelt through the Sacred Mysteries.

He received his Lord with the fervor of a little saint, and when his thanksgiving was over, he would linger a while by the railing

as though it pained him to say good-bye. When the chimes finally tolled the hour of departure, he would throw a kiss of farewell, so I am told, toward the tabernacle door and sigh, "Good-bye, Lord, but only for a little while. Sunday will soon be here again. Then I will come back again to see you once more," and so he would gently withdraw. As his trusty little craft bounded homeward he timed the stroke of his oar to his favorite hymn, and his soul was happy.

How many of you, little folks, have the zeal of that good Normandy boy? Now, should you, through some little ache or pain, be prevented from going to Mass, think at least of your Dear Lord as you say to Him:—

If I but had two little wings
And were a little feathery bird,
To Thee I'd fly, Lord Dear.
But now I know this cannot be
So I stay at home and think of Thee.

The Flamingo and the Stork.

BE KIND TO THE DEFORMED.

It would be better if I should not tell you, little friends, whence I gleaned the facts of the tale I tell you in this chapter. For I feel that, once knowing this, you will be prone to doubt what it relates. But do you not be so slow of belief as older folks. They may smile as they read these lines and say that history bears no record of what I tell you. But never mind, there are many queer happenings and little comedies that are enacted close by us each day, the note of which history will never contain. I speak in this way so that you may the more readily believe what these pages will reveal to you. For, while it is most peculiar, you may rest assured that it is quite true. For it was told me by a little mouse who stole into my room one day; and mice, as you know, are never known to be untruthful.

"Many decades ago," he began, in a squeaky voice, "there lived an old eagle, who, having been elected king of Birddom, felt very proud, as you may suppose. And

as most successful candidates do, he wished to let the world know of his unbounded joy. So he called his confidant, Mr. Rook, to himself on the morrow, and bade him fly over the mountain and invite the near-by Prince Sato-San to the royal banquet. He gave orders, also to his chef, Mr. Robin, to spare no expense in preparing a gorgeous fête. Mr. Rook bowed very low in acknowledgment of the courtesy paid him as royal messenger and said:

"'Your Highness, everything is in readiness for the banquet. But your guest of honor does not appear.' 'Yes, his delay piques me very much,' said his royalty. 'Call hither my soothsayers and let them riddle to me what the trouble may be.' A little bell tinkled and in came a pair of silly-looking prairie-hens. They appeared dazed but I guess they knew things, for they wore monocles and talked in a drawling tone. They deftly unrolled large parchments and began to read some quaint figures when, suddenly, without any apology, Mr. Rook began to go through a series of weird gyrations as though some one had stuck a pin in him. 'Behold, I see him now, soaring over the mountain astride a stork,' he cackled. And so he flew about as though trying to speak to every one at once. His nervousness

was contagious, for all seemed to be flurried. Sure as you live, it was as he had spoken.

"The entire bird assembly craned their necks to behold Prince Sato-San poised gracefully in mid-air on the back of a huge stork. Softly as a snowflake, did the royal carrier descend, until he stood before the throne of his sire, King Eagle. The Prince now alighted, and bowing so low that his crown toppled off, said, as all monarchs do in meeting kindred royalty, 'I am charmed to meet you.' Then turning to the birds of ordinary rank, he assured them that he would be pleased to listen to their songs and words of welcome. After these courtesies had been conformed to, the Prince was ushered to the throne prepared for him beside his Majesty. And as he strutted, two dainty little snow-birds held up his silken mantle.

"Old King Eagle now stood, and saddling his glasses upon his beak, for he was dim of sight, he read a program of the festival that was to follow. He was interrupted, however, time and again, in his remarks, by the cackle and laughter of two young flamingoes, whose conduct was scandalous. Now what think you they were doing? They were ever and anon making grimaces at the Prince's carrier, Mr. Stork. 'What

an ugly face he has,' said one. 'What skinny limbs, too,' rejoined the other. 'He's a stuffed bird,' was a piece of repartee. And so they tittered in derision at the old stork, who stood off on one leg unconscious of all the fun that was being leveled at him. All this while, do you know, I could see an ominous change creeping over the eagle's face," said the mouse in a new tone. "I suppose so," I answered.

"O yes! At length putting aside his glasses and scroll, the old king blurted out upon the unruly pair, the bitterest scolding that was ever heard. The Prince, until now ignorant of the cause of the turmoil, flew into a rage when he learned that his old servant was being treated with such contempt.

"'This shall end all gaiety to-day,' shouted he, stamping his jeweled foot upon the ground. The old stork now fixed his gaze upon his gallant master as though trying to divine the cause of his sudden change of humor. 'Come ye here before me,' the Prince called, drawing as he spoke a sword of gold from its scabbard! My! how nervous those flamingoes now grew, but they bowed to his behest. 'You are comely creatures now and beautiful of color,' he said in sharp tones. 'Because of those personal endow-

ments, you are conceited and look down upon those who are less fortunate. That is base and despicable.' King Eagle nodded his agreement. 'You make sport of the old stork's ugly figure, but of all birds, he is most faithful to his master. Now, in penalty for your want of feeling, I will cast the blight of crookedness upon you.' So saying, the Prince raised his sword aloft, uttering as he did, some unheard-of words that hailed, I suppose, from Japan. On the instant, the flamingoes began to tumble and coil in funny twists, at which every one roared in laughter. Their short, well-proportioned limbs grew long and bony. Their necks of graceful curve stretched until I thought they would break. The cuckoo called out some word just then that I could not quite catch. Their wings became dwarfed so that they flew only in fitful jumps.—Wouldn't that make you sad?" said the mouse. "O yes!" I sighed.

"The poor afflicted birds wept forsooth and pleaded for their former grace, but the Prince was resolute. And as he was borne away on the back of the stork, he said to those of twisted form: 'You and your posterity shall ever be as you are now.' And so it is, even in our day, the flamingo is a very ill-proportioned bird, but as far as I am con-

cerned, I think it serves them right. Don't you?"

Now, little friends, as you listened to the foregone tale, you perhaps mused to yourselves how heartless it was of the flamingoes, being comely themselves, to scorn one of their kindred birds less gifted. Yes, I feel you will not worry over the flamingoes' mishap. My! but how great a crime the Prince rated their conduct when he decreed that to the end of ages, flamingoes should ever be debarred from the entries to beauty-shows!

We would not feel at all alarmed, my little listeners, if this base practise of taunting others on account of their deformities, were confined to flamingoes and other unruly birds. But it isn't. You know as well as I, that many bad boys and girls resort to just such an unfeeling pastime. You know how often it happens, that amongst your companions there are some upon whom affliction of face or limb has come. Naturally, you would think that at least young Christians would have a tender spot in their hearts for those of their little friends who have been blighted. But the very opposite is oftentimes true, I am pained to say.

Let us take, for example, one of your little chums who is very lame, so that he cannot skip about, and romp in the games that you

so much enjoy. How sad his little heart must be! All the while he sees your young faces lit up with glee, his own poor heart is like a stone in his breast. So the day passes, but it metes out no gladness for him.

At home, you dance about beneath the sacred smiles of your good parents as lithely as kittens.

He moves about with pain, and slowly. Then the weight of his affections comes back to him more sharply than ever as there echo in his ear the unkind remarks, that some one of his playmates passed on him through the day. Yes, it is only perhaps, when his sobs have been quieted by slumber that his aching little heart finds rest. And often I suppose his angel guardian comforts him as with gentle hand the tears are wiped away and a comforting word is whispered.

O little friends, to those of you who are wont to call harsh names to your unequal little brethren, I say, "Beware! Your Saviour's displeasure will come upon you, ere many days go by. Do you know, I feel somewhat ashamed that I must bid you turn to the sparrows again to learn the lesson I fain would have you know. When one of their number falls wounded or bruised by the wayside, do you think its little brothers

stand afar off on some bough and titter at the cripple? No indeed! They fly on the instant to his aid, help him tenderly to their nests and try to comfort him in their sweet little methods. And be he after that, lacking in an eye or a foot, he is held in the greater endearment, and is made to receive the sweeter caresses. That this is true, you will admit as well as I.

When you mock the deformed, little friends, you by that fact withdraw yourselves from that blessed circle of tots whom Jesus loves. He Himself has given us a test, by which His young followers can be picked out.

"By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, that you have charity one for another." You plainly see, then, that when you fail to show mercy and kindness to one of your sorrowing playmates, you forfeit all claim to the title "Little friend of Jesus."

Boys and girls of boorish manner who make a practise of taunting their crippled little friends, act verily as did the cruel Jews who mocked Our Saviour in the hour of His agony. They tied those bleeding hands, worn with deeds of mercy, to a stone pillar. They disfigured his comely body by burning scourges. When the sweetness of His face was hidden in trickles of blood, they

could say, yes, verily, He was disfigured. His beauty had departed. Then it was that they, the fiendish rabble, stood by and mocked Him in scorn. O little friends! it is enough if I say that when you sadden the soul of an unfortunate, you sadden the soul also of your Master.

How your hearts are gladdened when you read the lives of those Christian children in the ages gone by! What touching examples they were to their young pagan friends of every virtue, but particularly of charity and gentleness to all! When they beheld anyone clad in tatters or maimed in feature or halt of limb, they would pause just there on the wayside, say a few sweet words of solace, and with eyes bedewed, stoop and kiss the brow of those saddened ones, "because," said they, "these are the beloved of Christ. His passion is continued in them."

How does your mode of action compare with that of your little brothers of long ago? Whisper the answer to Jesus, He awaits to hear it. Now, I have finished my scolding to you, little friends. I agree that to most of you it does not apply. But to whom it may, I say:

"Speak no ill, but lenient be
To others' feelings as your own;
If you're the first defects to see

Be not the first to make them known.
For life is but a passing day,
No lips can tell how short its space ;
Then, O ! the little time we stay
Let's speak of all the best we can."

The Elves and the Dragon.

THE ROSARY.

I AM glad to tell you this story, little friends, because not another soul save an old hermit and myself know it. So you see, no one can dispute it or say it happened this way or that.

I was seated one morning on a huge stone and looking out into the sea. I know not what were my thoughts exactly. Perhaps I was musing how it was the restless waves could throw themselves into such fantastic shapes and then dash so roughly against the rock on which I sat without hurting themselves. I suspect they laughed at me, I sat so long and looked so dreamy. After a time, I felt the rock beneath me move slightly as though it were trembling. I turned quickly and lo! two big eyes peered into mine. I cannot say why, but I was not afraid, because there was something tender in that gaze that instantly soothed all my fears.

It was an old hermit of the woods who softly drew close to me. Reaching out his hard, scaly hand, he took mine and stroking

it with assurance said, "Stranger, I am glad that you have come to break the gloom of my solitude. I want to tell you my sorry tale. Will you listen to it?" I pledged him that I would.

"Well!" he sighed, "I am lonesome for my little elves." "What, you, an old hermit, lonesome for little elves? said I. "Yes," he answered, lowering his head and squeezing my hand like a vice. "My past years were very, very happy. I dwelt here apart from a fevered and restless world. My soul was made merry by the company of a band of sprightly elves who came to me, I know not whence, and ministered to my wants as though I were their father. "My! but they were frisky little chaps," continued the old man, with a ripple of laughter. I would sit by the hour, do you know, and watch them frolic on the green, then I would laugh until my sides would ache."

He now turned his head as though to look afar. I followed his gaze and I could see that it centered on a cluster of tombstones, over which the strong arms of an oak spread as though to guard them. "Well," he went on, tossing his head aright and gripping my hand as though he knew I felt for him, "the little fellows came to me one morning bright and early, and said they, 'Grandpop,'

for they ever addressed me thus. 'We are going off into the forest to-day. Be watchful, for us, for we have planned to hunt to the death that cruel dragon into whose bloody claws so many gnomes and fairies have fallen.'

"Come here, you brainless little sprites," said I. "Beware of trying to conquer that wily old beast, unless you hang about your necks those precious amulets I gave you. You know how they can keep aloof all harm. —I suppose you know what an amulet is?" said he, turning his face full into mine. I assured him I did.

"Well," he went on, "do you know they laughed me to scorn, and the merry echoes rippled far into the forest. 'We have no fear,' said they. I blessed them. So off they scampered with their little bows and arrows strapped over their shoulders. And strange to tell, an unearthly voice then whispered, 'Some evil is to befall thy merry sprites to-day, grandfather.' But I did not heed it, and so the day passed on. I sat beneath that yew tree and looked out upon the waters, watching them heave and roll, as we do now.

"Soon the warm scented summer air lulled me to sleep. I must have slumbered very long, for I awoke with a chill. I looked about me. It was dark and the old Sun, with his face all aglow, was just sinking behind the

mountain and taking a last peep at me." Just here the waves began to rumble and splash with a great noise, as though to interrupt the tale of the old man. But he spoke on unheedful of it all. "Evening grew into night. I began to fear then for the safety of my little elves. I took my bugle in hand and blew with all my might, but no answer came, and the tall trees rocked to and fro as though stirred by some mighty emotion.

"As I strained my eyes in every direction, I saw a mite of a figure running toward me with all haste. It was Sapiens, one of the elves. 'Oh ! a terrible fate has come upon my brothers," he wailed, throwing his arms around me. 'You recall how I alone took my amulet with me into the woodland. They did not. The dragon has overpowered them and torn them to pieces. He seemed unable to harm me. Why, I know not.'" The old man here grew silent for a moment, then taking up the thread of his story, he said, "I grasped my trusty sword and bidding Sapiens show me the path, I began to wend my way to the scene of the sad event. Everything about us seemed to feel for us. The leaves seemed pensive and quiet upon the boughs. It struck me that they were weeping. The night winds, too, sighed through the tree-tops.

"You are hearkening, are you not, to my story?" said the old man here, as if to assure himself of my sincerity. "Indeed, I am," said I; "speak on." Then his voice grew more virile and he stood to describe the remainder of the doleful drama.

"After moping an hour through hedge and thicket, Sapiens clutched my arm convulsively. 'There, grandfather, see them,' he whispered in panting breath. Sure as he spoke the ghastly sight lay before me. The moon now came and threw her soft light around us as a mantle. There I saw vividly the young faces rent and mangled by the dragon's claws.

The old man's words now lowered in sweet cadence again and they tremored. "We bore them gently home," he sighed, "and on yonder hill do they rest. Only yesterday did Sapiens pass away and now I am alone."

Strange enough, he now began to walk away from me with his face buried in his brawny hands. And the last words I heard him murmur were, "O, if they had only kept their amulets by them, all this would never have happened!" But then I drew away. I do not like to hear one weeping, for it makes me weep too.

Poor old man! If I knew where to find

him, I would run now to comfort him, but I rather think, by this time, he is sleeping beside his little elves. If no one else were nigh, the angels must have come and laid him to rest, for he was a good old man.

Now, little friends, when I dwell on the facts of this tale, I struggle to keep back the conviction that rushes on me, that there are many foolish little elves amongst my young companions, who go out into the forest of this world, unguarded at times by any spiritual amulet whatsoever, knowing all the while, as they must, that along every trail that courses through the woodland of life there are dragons lurking, just as vicious as that one which tore the graceful little limbs of the merry elves. Now I know as well as you, for I've been to school too, that there is a great variety of spiritual amulets which can sweetly beguile grace into your souls. But right here I am going to urge the use of one I love the best of all because I blush not to tell you, it has saved me from the dragon oftentimes. I am speaking of you, sweet Rosary! Yes, sweet little comrade,

"For I have told you every grief
In all the days of twenty years
And in your decades found relief,
As I have wet you with my tears."

Why, then, should I not speak gently, little friends, to you of this devotion, since I feel that its wondrous power has lifted me to conquer many temptations and whispered sweet syllables of hope as I faltered in remorse along the wayside. You, dear little tots, stand now with your unstained fingers entwined about the bars of your little prison. You look without with young hearts panting to leap into the fray, but be assured by one who bears a few painful scars and some sad recollections of past defeats, that unless you walk out with the magic amulet of the Rosary pinned close to your hearts, you too will falter and be wounded as some of your elders have been. You must begin this day to realize that the Rosary must become part of your spiritual lives, if you would save your souls. You should love the Rosary. Why? It tells the tale of Mary's life, and she loves you. Above all it causes her to hold over you a mystic mantle of care, the very sight of which sends the demons trembling into hell.

Now you may complain and say that, as yet, I have told you very little about the Rosary. That is true. But it is not my purpose in this talk to tell you all I can concerning this sweet devotion. I am going to ask your teachers to do that for me. I am

simply trying to say one or two pious little things in the hope that you may be coaxed to come closer to Mary and sing to her on that tiny harp that so delights her soul.

When you were very small children, "just kids" as the big boys would say, you romped about the house in play. Your sparkling little eyes, like so many cameras, look into everything. Don't you remember in those fairy times how you saw the image of Christ crucified, hanging in your parent's bed-chamber. And close by, you saw something else that then excited your wonder. You thought it was a necklace perhaps, till wiser lips destroyed your fancy and unfolded to you that it was the Rosary, the chaplet of Mary. Then again, after the loving arms of your mother had tucked you away in your little crib, you will recall as you looked through the uncertain light, how a sacred whisper fell softly upon your ears, and you peeked out just in time to see the beads move slowly through your mother's fingers. Do you not know that all the while your name was being interwoven with those prayers? Now a few fleeting years have rolled away and you owe it to her who loved you the best to lisp her name in grateful memory as the little pearly beads wander through your sinless hands.

Some years ago, little Mildred, a favorite of mine, having heard the story of Mary, sighed as she said : " O how I would love to speak to her and tell her the little secrets of my heart. But alas ! there is no telephone reaching to Heaven, so what can I do?" " O yes, there is," came an answer. Just then the fairest little angel above the clouds came, and placing a pearly rosary in Mildred's hand whispered: " There, now your gentle Mother will lend her ear to this 'phone. Speak to her." My little friend has told me since that not a day goes by that does not see a fervid child whispering sweet little secrets to Mary. And she vows that her gentle Mother answers her. Now I do not doubt the word of Mildred. Why should you ?

I fancy now I can see little lips pucker up and eyes grow big when I say that every child who wishes surely to be saved should recite the Rosary every day. " O, it is such a long prayer," comes the plaint. Well, then, if you find it long, say part of it as you go tripping to the store on your errands or as you amble home from school. Here is another thought for you : In the history of the whole world, I don't suppose it has ever been recorded that a little boy or girl needed medicine to bring on sleep at night. Usually

they sleep too much. Well now, listen. Should such a child in the course of years be found by scientists or others, let me tell you a means to cure his malady instantly. Put into those restless little fingers a Rosary, let the lips of the patient be sweetly urged to move in prayer. And I can assure you that not many ticks of the clock will have gone by before two wearied little eyes will have closed in peaceful rest and another little fairy be wafted in "Baby's Boat" to Dreamland.

Isn't it funny how my thoughts insist like wilful little thieves in running back to the elves and the old man. As I think of them again, something seems to tell me that you, my little elves, will in later years be devoured by the Dragon of Temptation if you do not carry with you, yes, to your dying hour, your amulet, the Rosary.

Do this, then, and I will have nothing to worry me. You ask me, Do you, Father, always make your beads your companion in your journey? Yes, honest, I do! And when I can find no little chum to talk to, I whisper to my beads this tiny secret.

"Sweet little beads, I would not part
With one of you for richest gem
That gleams in kingly diadem;
You know the history of my heart.

You are the only charm I wear,
A sign that I am but a slave
In life, in death beyond the grave,
Of Jesus and His Mother fair."

The Snow and the Owl's Wisdom.

WHAT SNOW-FLAKES TEACH.

I NEVER knew before, that birds could be such little grumblers, until I chanced one day to hear the following talk between the two silly little sparrows and a wise old owl. It was winter time. The air was bitterly cold and through the morning the dancing snowflakes kept chasing one another through the trees and around an old stump, in a funny game known only to themselves, and they seemed to enjoy it.

All the while two lonely brown sparrows, who had just been ejected from their homes in the eaves of an old barn, stood on a withered limb, and shivered and shook. They kept silent so long, I thought they must be asleep or frozen. But no; for after a moment the elder of the two fluttered the flakes from his flimsy wings angrily, and said, "For the life of me I cannot understand of what use these pesky snowdrops are anyhow! They are the most impudent little teasers I ever knew, they dart into every nook and cranny without any apology.

They spread their icy mantle over the fields so that we poor beings can scarcely find a kernel of grain to eat. They fly into your face, then sweep away again, laughing as they go. "Oh! if I could annihilate them I would do so in a minute."

So spoke the first sparrow. His mate, looking very bitter, was about to begin to pour out the pent up feelings of his heart, when a cackling laugh caused him to startle. Looking up, the two little outcasts caught a glimpse of Mr. Owl. I must say it surprised me too, to see him out in broad daylight. However, there he was as big as life.

Now they say that the Owl is the wisest of birds, whether this is because he sits up all night studying while others are sleeping, or whether it is that he has little to say, I cannot tell. At any rate, his reputation for wisdom is well known.

Hobbling down to the limb on which the two little outcasts stood, Mr. Owl said, "You surprise me, strange sirs, by your complaining at the frolic of the snow-flakes. Do you not know that they reflect the beauty and power of God as well as you?"

"Oh! he is going to preach a sermon," said the first sparrow, nudging his little brother." "No, no! not at all," rejoined Mr. Owl smiling at the inference, but I mean to

exonerate these tiny snowflakes from the charge of being useless little things, if I can.

"Come here, some of you, my merry little things," called Mr. Owl. At his bidding a cloud of them swarmed about him just as tots hurry to one whom they love. "My! I didn't think you were so pretty," said the second sparrow, looking closely at one of the mites. "Now, strange friends, did you ever before behold such sweet and delicately formed beings as these flakes are?" said Mr. Owl, just like a professor. "See, no two of them are alike, some are shaped like stars, others resemble little fairy bells, whilst other some seem like delicately woven lace. Oh! indeed they are beautiful," continued Mr. Owl, each moment growing more fervid." "All this do we admit," quoth the second sparrow very peevishly, but of what use are they, since they starve us poor sparrows to death, by hiding from us all the wheat and grain. This seemed to be an objection that made the old Owl wince. Just here, one of the larger flakes flurried up into the sparrows' faces, and said, "For you individually, sirs, we may work temporary inconvenience, but you are a very small part of God's vast and beautiful creation. We purify the air that mankind breathes, we moderate the intense

cold, we protect the tender blades of grass and shoots of wheat and clean them. These you feast on in summer; we gladden the hearts of thousands of little children as they hail our coming with laughter and joy." Saying this the "spunky" flake danced away.

The two sparrows seemed quite dumfounded at what they had heard. The old owl winked with a meaning smile as he looked aside at his young friends and seemed to enjoy their ill-ease. Just then a ray of sunshine swept along the hills, and hurried through the trees, calling into life as it went by, myriads of diamonds. The old owl blinked for a time at the growing splendor, then fluttered off to his dark hole.

I stood and pitied the two sparrows. I thought they had suffered enough, so taking from my lunch box a piece of bread, I held it out to them. Strange to say, they instantly flew on to my outstretched hands, twittering what I supposed all the time to be, "Many thanks, good sir, many thanks."

Poor little sparrows. Of course I pitied their painful plight, but, I must say, I had to blush in the presence of Mr. Owl at their lamentable ignorance of the uses and purposes of the snowflakes. The thought hurries to me now, that perhaps there are

many of you little folks who may be ignorant of all the beautiful lessons the snow may teach.

A great man has said that we can learn something from even the most lowly beings in creation. No doubt it is true. Well, what may the snow teach us? As I write now myriads of these merry little rascals are dancing about my windows, tempting me to let them in. But I must be deaf to their call, however, and hurry through my talk with you.

Many of you little folks, I know, are like Job of old, who, when God asked him, "Canst thou enter into the treasures hidden in the snow?" replied, "What, Lord, can I answer? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." So it is with many of my little friends, were I to ask you what does a snowflake teach you? You would be constrained to answer, "Alas, what can I say?"

Well now, in looking at a plain of snow what first appeals to you? Is it not its spotlessness, its chaste whiteness? As it descends from the heavens it is untainted. It becomes so only after a time, in its contact with the earth. Through the day when the sunlight turns it into a million diamonds, or at night when the moon spreads her dreamy light on it, it seems ever chaste and beautiful.

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Here then, is the first lesson :—Nothing that is about us, should take away the purity of our souls, be it the glitter and mirth of a tempting world, or, be it the darkness of sin. No, our souls must be ever spotless in God's sight. Just as the snow's loveliness is affected neither by the darkness, nor the sunlight.

What is the second lesson it teaches us ? It is this, little friends :—Only a chaste heart spotless of sin can shine before God, and throw back the reflection of His love. Just as soon as that whiteness of soul is destroyed by the soil of sin, just so soon does it lose that sweet reflecting power.

O, little children ! let this reflection pass through your minds as in the winter you behold the dazzling snow :—" I wonder if my soul is as pure in the sight of God as the snow is in mine ? " If not, then will you sigh, and say in fervor that earnest prayer, "Wash me, O Lord, and I shall become whiter than snow."

" Now, I feel that this talk would not prove of real interest, to the boys at least, if I were not to say something about the snowball, that little sphere in which there is concealed so much mischief, yet so much merriment. That little companion of boyhood days that has sailed through the

frosty air with hopes and ambitions behind it. Just as the little projector will sail through life, only to fall to earth again and melt away. I am getting too serious again. Now for the snowball.

It teaches us that in unity there is great power.

A tiny flake of snow taken by itself, is a very light and flimsy thing, but when a young muscular hand grasps many of them, and fashions them into the deadly projectile known as the "snowball," then they become endowed with great power for good or evil according as they are directed, so, I count you little folks, to be as snowflakes. Of your own individual selves, you can as yet effect little good, but, when a Master-hand begins to mold you into a definite body, ah! then by your accumulated strength you can do wonders. This will be true particularly in after life, when you as men and women will form yourselves into societies under the guiding hand of Holy Mother Church. Then will you see more clearly the lesson of the snowball. Then will you learn, that by your federation you can be a commanding power that will work great things for your faith and your country.

But, here I am drifting into serious views again. Something is buzzing at my ears,

another notion about the snowflake; the little teasers are still dancing and prattling through the brisk air, and as I look at them this is a thought that comes to me: We often pray to our good Lord, for days at a time, beseeching some spiritual favor. After a time, seeing no apparent effect of our pleading, we grow weary and cease praying altogether.

This, surely, is very wrong, and for this I hear the snow scolding, "Do you not know that the most precious graces God gives, He imparts little by little, not by one instant flow? Do you not know also that your Heavenly Father sees what is best for your good, and perhaps he even sees that should He grant the favor you yearn for, it would after a time be to your ruin. O yes, little friends, the snowflakes speak sensibly. So it is with prayer and grace.

Finally, our gentle friends of purest white tell us that though young and fair we may be, we will soon melt away into the soil and be forgotten as they are. So we may dance through the sunlit air of life for a space of years, but sooner or later the law of gravitation will prevail. The inexorable law of decay will rule, and we shall pass away; while still above us the flakes will fly merrily on, and quietly spread over us in due season

a mantle of purest white. See to it, then, that you keep your souls ever spotless. As you frolic about in the winter time, reflect on the noble things the snow can teach you.

Following the Master.

SUFFER PATIENTLY THE PRIVATIONS OF THIS LIFE.

COME, follow Me! Come, follow Me! was the burden of a sigh that passed as a dying zephyr through the dreaming forest, and He who gave voice to it was young and passing fair, though in his eyes there lurked a secret sadness: and the brooklet close by, that caught the sound of the voice, paused for the moment to harken, then hurried on again through the rocks and tanglewood, seeming all the while to prattle: "I, Good Master, would follow you if you would, but you have not called me. The sprightly little birds chirped merrily as they fluttered from limb to limb, in playful love, above His head, "We will follow Thee, and sing thy praises, good Master. Bid us come to Thee!" But these words of good spirit seemed to fall unheeded on the Stranger's heart, for His voice rose more plaintively than before, as though speaking to some one afar, "Come, follow Me; for My yoke is sweet, and My burden light, and you shall find rest for your souls."

Ah! is it plain, then, that not to the

brooks, or flowers, or birds, or rocks, were the words spoken, "Come, follow Me," but to the children of the hamlet in the distance, whose little feet were leading them away from Him as time wore on, into that country over which His enemy, the Prince of Darkness, held sway. Strange to relate, some of the children, after a time, caught the echo of His voice, and hastened aside into the wilderness, to be the followers of the Gentle Master. And they clung to His flowing girdle and traced His footsteps, and in their hands He placed sprigs of myrtle and palm, and they one and all answered to His sigh, "Lord, we will follow Thee even unto death. Then holding forth His hand He said again, "Come, and you shall see My yoke is sweet, and My burden light, and you shall find rest for your souls." And they went, these faithful few, and He embraced them. He told them, too, as they scampered after Him, "I will ask you to do, to suffer nothing, that I have not done and suffered, little friends. Should you be called upon to trudge across the bleak sands and wind-swept deserts, I first will go to mark your pathway, and you follow. When night comes on, we shall take our rest in the forest, apart from the wicked world, and the angels shall be near us as we slumber. "Good Master,

whither shall our journey tend," queried a child as he tugged at the Lord's mantle. And the Master smiled and pointing upward said, "To Paradise."

So onward moved the chosen little army. Often were their feet torn by the stones and briars. Often too did the moon's pale light betray a pearly tear trembling on the fair young cheek of some lonely one. But the hearts of all were happy.

The days passed on into months, and the year wore away. The valiant little band would now and then come without warning upon a fierce lion, whose very roar betimes chilled these little hearts. But the Master had schooled them in the use of arms, so they always silenced the growling beast and slew him. And through the longest time there was peace.

But now in their wake came lurking a queer being of the forest. Children of the country about, were wont to call him Pan. His face was not ugly, nor was his voice harsh, but his lower limbs resembled those of a goat. They say he was fond of music and of jollity with the forest nymphs. I am told his antics were funny in the extreme, when he played on his tymbals and cavorted on the green. Here is something strange of him, however : his notes had the

power of molding the wills of others to his own. Yes, it is said by one who surely knows, that should a child harken to his piping, he would in the end become blind and deaf. Oh, dear! it can hardly be true. But still in a big book it says that many a tot running after him to listen to his songs, was overpowered by his evil eye, so that those two little feet toddled after the Master no longer; nor cared any more to be His follower, but preferred forsooth to dance with Pan and his naiads and so make merry through the livelong day. The wearisome following of the master did not last so long. A lordly mountain at last lifted itself before their tired eyes and the morning sun threw its glory about it as a halo.

"Behold, my children," said the Good Leader at last to His little soldiers. "Our marching and battling are now at an end, come aside and rest awhile. And He refreshed their blushing cheeks and parched lips with crystal water. "There are many mansions in yonder mountain," he said, "and in their halls I have prepared a place for you who have been true to me. Therein, will your weary hearts find peace, and your little aching limbs be clothed in the robe of immortality." "How beautiful!" heaved their little bosoms in a grateful sigh.

These words were scarcely spoken, when a vast and radiant chorus of blessed spirits were seen coming from the clouds about them; angels with glittering wings came softly, too, and lifted tenderly from the shoulders of the little travelers, the heavy packets they had been carrying. I know not how it happened, but a fleecy cloud now spread itself under them, and bore the little army heavenward, amidst the canticles of angels. Again was taken up the half forgotten refrain, "His yoke is sweet, and His burden light, and we have found rest for our souls." As they entered the portals of the Mansion, golden crowns were placed upon their brows. Then I saw them no more. It is said that those who tarried to listen to Pan and his naiads, became bewildered as a forrest fire swept by. Most of them were consumed I trow. Their cries for help were pitiful in the extreme. But from the darkness came only the response, "Too late, too late."

You cannot doubt for an instant, little friends, who the fair Stranger is, who stood by the forest-border and called "Come, follow Me! He represents your Blessed Lord, Who passes amongst His children of to-day as of yore, and whispers to their hearts the same sweet refrain, "Come, follow Me! He

especially would have little ones to be His followers. Now isn't it sad when you think that only the echo of His voice comes back when He calls, or, perchance, the response of a bird or a brook which are ever true to Him? And again, undaunted, He calls with the voice of His grace, "Come, follow Me! you little children of the crowded city, come aside till I whisper to you some sweet secrets." How glad I am, when I know that not every child stands cold of heart to His loving call. For some do leave the city of dim and wild pleasure, and run to Him when He calls. Such He embraces and blesses. But He tells them, it is no easy thing to follow Him, for in doing so they must shoulder their budgets of trouble, and sorrow, and poverty, and tears. In a word, they must take up their tiny crosses and follow Him. They must bear with smiling faces vexing poverty and murmur not at sickness and pain.

There is an incident in your Divine Lord's Life, that always makes the moisture steal to my eyes, and so I ponder upon it but seldom. You remember when our Saviour was entering the city He loved the best. He had just dried His eyes after a good cry, for He was lonesome, and felt hurt at the coldness of many of His little friends. When He came to the city gates, thousands of tots

just like you, crowded about Him in wild joys. They sang and threw blossoms and palms in His path, and Jesus was pleased, I know, as they chanted, "Hail to the Son of David." I suppose they fairly hid Him in flowers. And so He passed on.

Six days later, that same sweet face passed without the city gates. Oh! what a sad change had come over it. Christ is bleeding, and laden with a cross. See how He looks about for His little friends to come to Him. But no. Alas! what do I hear? What do I see? Some of them join their shrill voices in the shout "Away with Him! Crucify Him! Oh! how different their song now from that of a few days before. Oh! faithless little ones, I hope you were few. You scampered after Jesus in His glory, when He was ladened with blossoms. You turned your backs on Him when sadness and thorns have befallen His brow. Oh! Shame! You! little friends, would never do such a thing, I know. Tell me, what is the journey through this life but a following of Jesus? When He comes along the highway in triumph, thousands of eager little feet run after Him, and share the music and sunshine. What do I mean? Why, when we have no poverty or pain to suffer, we cling close to our Lord. But when he heads toward Cal-

vary in tears and suffering, when He sends us afflictions and privations in this life, how many follow Him then? Think this question over, little friends, and answer to your own souls.

Some of you may ask, as did the children of the forest, "What is to be my reward for trudging patiently after my Master? The response is found in the tale just told, "Paradise." The young soldier who suffers in patience the pangs of poverty or any other affliction, has reason to feel consoled for bearing them in union with his Lord. He is answering bravely the sweet call, "Come, follow Me!" Oh! I am forgetting to tell you who Pan is meant to represent. This strange character, my little friends, is a type of Satan, ever on the alert to steal away, from Christ's little band, some worthy soul. Yes, he plays a deadly music, one which if listened to, lulls to sleep the soul. Yes, it is a sad fact that some little folks fritter away the hours of youth in dancing to the music of Pan, and leading lives of ease and sensuality. Do they hear the call, "Come, follow Me?" Oh! yes. But the evil whispering of the Devil seems to enchant them. Then the night comes on. The music is still. The forest fire rages. In their remorse these foolish youths call for help. But ofttimes

to them, as to the unwise virgins, is given the answer, "Too late! too late!"

Taking up again the thread of our story, you recall, little friends, how beautiful was the end of the journey. Ah! still more beautiful will be the final scene in the life of the little followers of Jesus,—those who spend their lives in humility, poverty, and chastity. From the weary hearts of such will the angels lift the burden of care, and the good Leader will take them gently to a place of refreshment, light, and peace.

Little friends, there is only one test by which your love for your gentle Saviour can be proven. He says, "If any man love me, let Him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Now, in your guileless years, if your little hands hold few of the world's goods; if your little limbs be clad in tatters rather than fine clothes; if, too, at Christmas time, no trees, or toys cheer your humble little home, be not downcast, you are following Jesus. The cross is then on your shoulders. Kiss the hand that placed it thereon. Throw your tiny arms in embrace about it and be glad, for you are one of those to whom the Master has called, "Come, follow Me."

The Animals' Congress.

KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.

"Good morning, Mr. Rabbit, whither are you hurrying at such an early hour? My goodness! how handsome and prim you look in your glossy white coat, but arn't you a trifle early? As yet I have scarcely rubbed the sleep out of my eyes." It was none other than Mr. Squirrel who thus addressed his friend Jack Rabbit as the latter bounded proudly by.

"I am surprised," Mr. Rabbit made answer, now pausing and looking up at the limb whereon Mr. Squirrel was perched, "indeed, more than surprised am I that you query of me why I am hurrying. Have you not heard of the edict that our worthy Sire, King Leo Lion, has issued?"

"Edict!" exclaimed Mr. Squirrel, jumping down and becoming thoroughly interested. "Why, what in the world is an edict?" "See here," snapped Mr. Rabbit curtly, "I cannot tarry now to enlighten you on the subject, but, I advise you to come along with me as fast as you can. For, if the King

should miss one of his subjects this morning, it will go hard with that subject I assure you."

Now utterly confused, Mr. Squirrel ran along with his prudent adviser, not even waiting to don his best coat. They took the shortest way to the meeting grove, jumping streams and fences at a bound, in their eagerness to be on time.

At last, after jaunting through dark winding ways, the sound of distant voices struck their ears. "Ah!" sighed Mr. Rabbit, hastening still faster, "see, we are here at last."

There, seated on his throne, a huge stump, bedecked with moss, was King Leo Lion, and grouped about him were hundreds of his loyal subjects. Every species of animal in the dense forest had sent an envoy. The two late comers had hardly been seated when his majesty, the forest King, arose to address the assembly. All bowed respectfully as he ascended the rostrum. A hush, like a spell, stole over all.

"My loyal subjects of this forest kingdom," he began in sonorous tones, "I have called you hither to-day for the consideration of a subject that deeply concerns us all. It is this:—We have suffered in silence long enough, the cruelties that have been heaped

upon us by those wicked beings whom the world is pleased to call men. We shall stand their indignities no longer!" Here the varied audience, thrilled by the eloquence of the speaker, broke into loud and long applause. When the King raised his mighty paw, however, in a menacing gesture, the tumult quieted down.

"Now, my worthy subjects, your hearts, I am sure, burn with a desire of revenge, when you recount how many of your fathers and kinsfolk have been trapped and maimed by these shrewd beings who claim to be of superior intelligence."

Many faces now dropped, as sad memories were awakened, and many were the tears that were stealthily sniffed away.

"Bold as it may seem, sirs, I intend that we shall wage war on these our oppressors, and treat them as they have treated us—without mercy. My slender subject here," he continued, pointing to Mr. Robin, "can recount to you how he has been confined a prisoner behind bars through years, for no cause whatever. My gentle friend here at my right, Miss Pussy, can set before you a tale of cruelties that would make your hearts melt with pity."

The gaze of all was now turned to Miss Pussy, but she looked demure and did not

raise her eyes. "Will you, then, my followers, come with me and inflict upon these men the pains they have so mercilessly meted out to your brethren?" "We will! we will!" came the deafening cry that filled the forest.

"Your Lordship, hold a moment!" spoke a timid voice coming from the rear of the group. It was Mr. Lamb, and he gently ambled to the side of King Leo Lion. "Let us not be carried away by impulse or passion, worthy comrades, let us reflect. What good can accrue to us as a result of waging war on our oppressors? Can we not avoid them? Can we not live here in peace amidst these cool glens, avoiding the misery and heat of battle? Ah, let us remember that we are creatures of God as well as mankind. If they choose to kill and wound us, let us bear it without resentment. Perhaps by our meekness and submission, we shall bring them to feel remorse for their misdeeds."

Now I have attended many a convention and heard countless telling speeches, but Mr. Lamb's was, by far, the most eloquent I have ever listened to. I could now see deep thought on the features of all, even old Mr. Rhinoceros ceased snoring, and stayed awake through the whole proceeding. King Leo Lion now arose and in subdued

tone said, "Good sirs, the logic of Mr. Lamb we cannot resist. Second thought is perhaps better. We shall do as he says." All present nodded assent.

The Congress began now to disband. The birds flew away singing their sweetest songs. The rest after exchanging adieus, bounded through the forest to their respective homes. The meek Mr. Lamb remained where he had spoken, for he did not care to meet Mr. Jackdaw who insisted on getting extracts of the speech for publication. Being fatigued anyway he laid down on a mossy pillow to rest. Then I left him.

Little friends, fully am I aware that this story makes you smile. The idea of animals holding a meeting and making fine speeches is indeed funny. Supposing, however, that all these dwellers of the forest, were for a time endowed with the gifts of intelligence and speech, what do you suppose would be the first thing that they would talk about? I imagine their discourse would, in a great measure, be concerning the harshness, of many of you children, to them. Too frequently in truth do many little folks fail to consider the feelings or rights of poor dumb animals.

Your Good Father in Heaven gave these willing creatures to man to be his helpmates

in his toil. They were never intended as objects of abuse. In creating animals Almighty God has placed upon them certain duties which they must fulfil, and as far as I have observed they perform these duties most willingly and well. They never halt at a task be it ever so hard. They wear their lives away in being the servants and slaves of mankind.

Well, now, does it ever occur to you that you have certain obligations in regard to your willing helpmates? Indeed you have. First of all, consider that they are the work of your Creator. They in their own way give glory to God as you do in yours. For the Psalmist told me so. Again, God loves them to a degree as He must love all the works of His hands. Therefore, when you use them harshly you can readily see wherein you sin. If a wicked boy were to snatch from your hand a pretty artificial bird, which you had expended days in fashioning, and mutilated or defaced it, you would no doubt feel angered. Now, then, animals bear even a closer relation to their Creator than the clay bird would bear to you, its maker.

Some little folks seem by nature to be cruelly disposed to animals. I saw a little chap one day driving a pretty Shetland

pony, every few seconds I could hear the whip whistle through the air, and then lash down upon the back of the little pet. At last catching sight of a kind-hearted old man who was working in the field, the suffering pony lifted its head and made a queer noise, which the old man straightway interpreted; for coming to the roadside he gave the boy a few cuts with his own whip then asked him how he liked it. I could not catch the lad's reply, but I learned since he never whipped the pony thereafter.

I have known boys, and perhaps you have too, who make a habit of a cruelty more painful than the foregoing. I speak of those unpitying young rascals who rob or destroy the nests of birds. I chanced to walk, some time ago, close to a lilac bush. There I saw a poor bird hopping nervously from one twig to another, its voice was not one of song, but rather a pitiful cry. I felt for the defenseless little thing, so I chirped to it as well as I could, meaning to let it know that I was its friend and would be a help to it if I could. Just then I heard a rustling noise among the bushes. I saw a lad with a roguish face running away. In his hand he grasped the tender offspring of the weeping mother. She flew after him and in her own touching way besought the young

villain not to rob her of her treasure, but the boy was bereaved of all noble instincts, and continuing his race was soon out of sight. The tender captive, so I heard, died shortly afterward of loneliness for its mother.

I really cannot fathom the secret of a boy's fondness for a pastime such as this. An old history relates that in a certain part of Persia, those who ill-treat animals are subjected by the chief ruler to just such a pain as they had meted out to the poor things. Good for the Persians! There law is very salutary. I would like to see it enforced in our own country. You will never see a well-bred child resort to practises inhuman as these. Therefore, if you wish to be classed with those who possess some sense of refinement, treat your faithful servants with kindness.

Here is a fact, little friends, that cannot fail to impress you. Most animals are gifted with a deep sense of gratitude, a trait which boys and girls often fail to show.

Have you ever spoken kindly to a faithful dog? If so, did you not then notice, how readily he appreciated it, how he seemed, even to detect the friendly inflection of your voice? He came bounding up to you with a strange whine that was really an attempt at speaking. Then perhaps he licked your hand.

If you gently stroke the mane of a horse, or pat him, he will lick your hand, or whinny, or neigh, to tell you he realizes your little act of kindness. If you chirp to a bird as it hops from tree to tree, it will stop and answer you as politely as you please, or it will break out into pretty song. Isn't this all beautiful and does it not show what splendid traits all animals possess when we treat them with a little thoughtful care?

Remember too, my little friends, that some animals have done deeds of bravery, and have shown devotedness to their masters, that would put many a child to shame. It is not needful that I tell you what great service the St. Bernard dogs render to poor belated travelers in the bitterness of winter, when they have fallen victims to the biting winds that sweep across the Alps, and how many a watch-dog will stand guard at your door through the dreary night when he suspects that thieves, or such kind, will steal in to harm you.

Only a few days ago I read in a daily paper, the touching story of a mastiff who, when his master died, wandered to the grave and there kept vigil until he died of hunger rather than leave the form, though hidden, he loved so well. Surely all these little

facts betoken a spirit of loyalty in animals if their masters but treat them kindly.

Try then to retain, little friends, the lesson I have tried to teach in this chapter. No one could blame the members of the entire animal kingdom if they, some day, should call a congress to protest against the cruelties of mankind.

Alonzo and the Zang.

BAD HABITS.

It is said that not more than three persons in the whole world know the story I am going to tell you, little friends, so there can be no doubt of it having real interest for you. It was told me by an old traveler, who came from distant Asia to see me.

"A comely youth," he said, "lay sleeping one morning under the shade of a palm tree. By his feet a cascade came tumbling over the rocks. Its waters were of a greenish hue and fragrant. He was evidently a stranger in those parts, for his toga was at variance with all the types about him. His features, too, were more regular than those of the ordinary Asiatic boy. From his locks there came an odor as of spikenard. His feet were shod with jeweled sandals. These things bespoke his wealth. A palm tree moist with dew bent over his form and threw its branches awide to keep from his eyes the rays of the rising sun. The belated young traveler now and then sighed heavily, but he did not open his eyes. His heart was

perhaps heavy, or was he dreaming of his home beyond the seas?

From behind the tree, there now stepped, with a lithe movement, a figure youthful, too, and graceful, but his skin was as black as ebony. He fell on one knee, and laying his muscular hand with much gentleness on the brow of the young slumberer, he whispered, with much animation as his eyes stared, "Awake, Alonzo, a zang has fallen from the limb upon your head." Now a zang, he who told me this tale, declares, is a small insect no bigger than an ant, but in one night it can grow to the size of a serpent, if it chooses.

I have since consulted wise men all over the world to tell me of the vicious insect, but, save one, they pleaded ignorance of the existence of such a being. Still I do not doubt the word of my old friend from Asia.

Now, Alonzo awoke, but not with any great evidence of alarm. "What of it?" he said with a bland smile. "Why this fear? If a zang has fallen amongst my locks, let it stay there. A thing so small can never hurt me."

"Mark what I say," answered the black slave. "Either you will kill it now or it will kill you ere to-morrow." That would make any one shudder, wouldn't it? But Alonzo merely laughed in scorn, as he arose. He threw his luggage over his shoulder and

began to walk into the desert, continuing his journey. The native looked at him with an expression of pity, and as Alonzo faded from the horizon, he sighed and sat by the foot of the tree, and his thoughts were sad. All through the day, the native kept sighing, "Alas, the poor stranger will lament all this folly to-morrow."

When the cool winds of evening came to soothe Alonzo's heated brain, and waft to him sweet memories from afar, he had traveled many miles. He ate some fruit to slake his thirst, and then, as if by a spirit hand, his eyes were closed in slumber. Again the same sighs came as in the morning—again the same smile that told the trend of his slumber thoughts. I do not know how many hours he had been sleeping, but he was at last awakened by a smothering feeling. Some unseen yet mighty hand was grasping him about the throat. Could it be the treacherous slave? Had he come to strangle him?

He tried to wrest himself from the clutches of the monster, but in vain. As he glanced beside him, he saw, running to his assistance, the black native who had warned him on the morning previous. "Alas! Alonzo, I told you of the zang's treachery, did I not? But you would not do my bidding. Its arms are now mighty and no human power can

free you." But he had not finished these words when Alonzo's fair young face became covered with the pallor of death—then it grew black. His eyes glared from their sockets. Strange as it may seem, a passing cloud paused to look down on him. It trembled and shed a few tears on Alonzo's face, fixed in the last agony. The native tenderly covered the form of the young traveler with a mantle. And he said as he walked sadly away: "Sleep on now, unwise one, in your final slumber."

I know the desert spot whereon Alonzo now sleeps, for my old visitor showed it to me on the map. A maiden, from a distant land, comes faithfully once a year on the wings of morn to lay a lily on the lonely grave. She loved Alonzo, for though he was reckless, he was loyal and true.

Now, little friends, as long as Alonzo's grave is seen to so sweetly by the maiden so fair, I will not worry; for I know she will be faithful to her task once a year. But rather I will concern myself about the many little travelers who are about to set out across life's desert. And I will warn them, if zangs should fall upon their heads and if they will not kill them, then I perhaps will fret as the slave did, and perhaps too, be an unwilling witness to another sad end.

In the tale just told, note what a true type Alonzo is, of you, young reader. He was youthful and comely, so are you, I know. He was possessed of riches, as perfume came from his brow, and jeweled sandals were on his feet. You are wealthy too, in enjoying God's grace. He was traveling to his own country to meet and be united with one he had learned to love. You are traveling toward Heaven—your home—to live forever with your Beloved, who loves you. But I will carry the parallel no further, as I hope that, unlike Alonzo, you will kill every moral zang, every bad habit, you see coming to fold you in its iron grasp. I fancy I can see your little brows ruffle up as the plaint comes from your lips, "O Father! How gloomy your words are in this little talk." They may be, children, but I cannot paint a somber picture with bright colorings.

As yet, you know not what real sorrow is, because you know not what a sinful habit is. The few little tears that have crept down your cheeks have quickly been chased away by your merry smiles. Sighing is a dreary pastime about which, as yet, you have learned but little. Future time will tell you that habits of sin alone can cause real gloom to come to your bosoms.

You have already seen, little ones, how

earnestly the good slave entreated Alonzo to kill the zang. Do you not remark how fervently your elders and teachers warn you now to kill some evil practise that is beginning to lead you away? Ah, it is because they can foresee the baneful outcome of a continued bad habit—just as the watchful pilot can see ruin lurking to envelop his craft, if he turn her not aside. A sinful habit, little friends, is the most merciless monster that can lay its fangs upon a child. It will not be satisfied with casting you down, now and then, but it will crave to gain complete control over you, then recklessly to ruin you, as the zang did Alonzo.

Some of my little friends may accuse me here, of my old failing—of getting too serious or of magnifying tiny failings. One of you may declare that a lie is a small thing—to steal is a venial fault—to foster an unchaste fantasy, is no great crime. That all may be true, my innocent little ones, but these faults or habits are all young serpents and if not cast off now, they will sting later on in years, and that sting will cause you many a sigh, as you sit alone and ponder over your folly.

Remember, little friends, that those wicked men, whom you frequently hear of now-a-days in our daily papers were once good and

innocent children, as you are now. From the eye that now flashes with a vicious anger, once beamed the soft light of meekness. From the lips that vomit forth words of villainy, in the long ago there came the sweetness of prayer and holy song. The hand that has just been reddened with a murderer's blood, once was clasped about a mother's neck or fondled piously the Rosary beads. The feet that now wander through the world in despair, once went in reverential tread to the "Banquet of Love."

Yes, little friends, if you were to ask any one of those unfortunates whose wail of hopelessness is heard around the world, what it was that caused their ruin, they will, with one accord, tell you it was their neglect in conquering some evil habit, that in their tender years began to entice them into slavery. What then are you to do, to guard yourselves against a like fall into bondage? Why! Oppose the very first enticings of any action that you perceive is likely to grow into a habit. Every child has a door to his or her heart, to that door there is a key. That key is your will. Should you some day suspect that there is an evil habit lurking there, pluck it out with the golden lancet of prayer, as a surgeon would cut away a cancerous tissue. Then, every night as you

put your tired little heads upon the pillow, just open the door and peek into the crevices of those hearts. "Has any dangerous visitor stolen in to-day, I wonder?" you will muse to yourself. "I will see." Then if you find none, thank your Saviour and vow to him that you will be as vigilant on the morrow.

But perhaps, you will now sigh as you read and say, "O dear! I have not one, but many, many bad habits-" What then? Well, as you cannot pull out of a garden many little weeds at once, so you will be unable to root out your evil tendencies all at once. Take one at a time and with God's help, all will be well.

The Mermaid.

GRACE.

I TAKE it, little friends, that everybody knows "Tacks" the Mariner. He was a mere boy, I know, but braver than he never lived. As you scan the list of notable men you may not be able to see his name, for being a mite of a chap they print it in tiny letters, and so you may pass it over. Tacks was wrecked once, and went to the bottom of the sea. There is another, who claims the honor of making his dwelling there, but Tacks never met him. The little hero of my tale was hiding behind a clump of sea-weed one day, when he noticed a fair mermaid, Margarita by name, come sweeping through the sunlit waters. A weird yet pleasant music charmed Tacks so that he sighed in rapture! Closer the mermaid glided, more soothing the song became. Now it died away and a ripple of laughter broke through the caverns of the sea. "O dear!" said Margarita, blending her smiles, "I feel so happy that I long to impart my secret to some one. I must tell, yea, even the fishes

of the sea, of my pearl of joy, if I can find no other." Just then Tacks was about to say, "I, pretty one, will harken to your story," but a fish close by whispered, "Do you hear what she says?" "Yes indeed," came the answer. "I wonder would her grace deign to look upon common fishes such as we are, and tell the secret of her merriment. She speaks of a pearl. What does she mean? We will swim over and talk to her."

"Come hither, you timid little darlings," said Margarita as she caught sight of the little rogues drawing nigh to her as stealthily as would young mice. "Can I do anything to make you light-hearted and gay?" queried Margarita, showing her pearly teeth. Here Tacks was about to put in his bid for a favor, but his voice failed him. "Yes, yes," answered the fat little fellow next to her. "Tell us why you are ever joyful? Why your laugh has such a merry ring to it?" "Well now I will, and that this instant," said Margarita draping her tresses in graceful folds over the side of a rock. "I want to see you dear little creatures ever happy even as I," continued the mermaid, throwing back her auburn curls. "You ofttimes marvel at my continued good humor." "We do," sighed the listening fishes. "So do I," said Tacks to himself. "Well-nigh a year

ago," continued the queenly Margarita, "as I was wending through the jagged rocks in the caves of the sea, I met a youth of fair features and gentle mien. He said, 'You are not happy, Margarita, for I can read your heart.' I blushingly confessed I was not. 'Then,' said he, lifting from his purse a glistening pearl, 'take this, guard it well and gloom shall never cast its shadows on your fair brow.'

"I was amazed exceedingly, I took the priceless gem into my hands," and here she showed it to the fishes. Tacks took a peep too. "Straightway I felt as if I had been wafted to another sphere." I laughed, I glided through the waters without effort. I sang. And now I wish all of you to know the secret of my joys. "But," she said, darkness is coming on. Time for all little fishes to go to rest. I cannot tarry longer now, I will see you all on the morrow." And so, Margarita, rising like a dove from her velvety seat, passed away. The fishes seemed to me to be really enchanted, for they looked after her until darkness enfolded her from sight. The mermaids by the rock peeped around the corner, then said they, "Let us rest here for the night, and when morning comes we will rise, and go to meet our royal sister." And so the fishes and the mermaids

huddled together and soon their heads were bobbing to sleep. A lone moonbeam stole beneath the waters in quest of some one to play with. Tacks straightway jumped at a chance for fun. They giggled at each other for a time. Then I saw Tacks wink. The moonbeam understood, for it folded the lad in her arms and hurried to the surface. The last time I saw them they were flying over the hills.

In the meanwhile the sirens' dismal cry aroused the slumberers and startled them. "Ah, I fear," said one of the mermaids clasping her hands as if in prayer, "some calamity is about to befall us. The sirens' wail always bespeaks evil. Look, my sisters, who is that ugly creature that draws nigh with wicked face and matted hair? She is weeping!" This uncomely being lifted her hand as though to prevent further comment, and said, "Oh, sister, you call me ugly, and keenly do I feel my deformity. Be not affrightened. I am none other than Margarita! When I left you an hour ago, I foolishly went to the dragons' cave, and, O miserable me! they bartered with me for my pearl. In its stead they gave me a beautiful plume, which withered as I touched it. My grace of features and form withered too on the instant."

"Oh, woe is mine!" she cried and passed behind an unfeeling rock. Nor did any one see her again, as far as I know.

You have harkened to my tale, little ones, now try to grasp its meaning. Margarita, the erstwhile sweetest of the mermaids, is a type of the child who for a time lives on in the grace of God, but who after a while allows herself to be enticed by the *tempter* into the caves of sin, and gives up God's grace in exchange for some pleasure of the moment which wilts away, as did the feather, ere it was enjoyed.

You may remark, "Margarita became so suddenly deformed!" Ah! as the blighting of natural loveliness is a process that takes but a fleeting moment, so the loss of spiritual grace comes too in the twinkling of an eye. See then how carefully it must be guarded.

In this chapter, little friends, I fain would impress upon your good little hearts the necessity of guarding each hour your pearl of grace, and of avoiding the dragons' cave, *i. e.*, The occasions of sin.

You would like to live happily all the days of your lives, I know you would, and to be ever in the humor of singing as Margarita was, for what is life bereft of happiness? A miserable exile indeed. Now there is just

one, and only one, secret of being ever light-hearted.

This is keeping ever within your souls the light and warmth of Divine Grace.

If I were to ask now what is grace, you would perhaps become confused, you would like to peek into your catechisms. But wait. I will define it for you in a childlike fashion.

Grace is that gentle guidance that comes to us from above. It falls as gently upon the soul as dew upon the parched flowers. With its coming, we feel that Jesus our Lord is near us, and we say to ourselves, "Oh, how I love You, Lord. How I rejoice in serving You. I will ever be Your devoted child." Grace is a little slender ladder that tends heavenward. It is a pure and gladsome light that cheers your way, that makes your eyes sparkle and your hearts beat faster. It is that sweet feeling of soul, that leads you to detest sin and love all that is chaste and good. Again: grace is that sweet voice which beguiles you to prayer. Yes, it is all the foregoing. It is more. It is the comforting blessing of your Saviour that lightens your toils through the days, and sweetens your rest at night. It is, again, the cause of the wondrous fortitude that enables you to stand and look death in

the face without a tremor. It is, lastly, little friends, the voice that whispers in your ear, as your mother would whisper, the secret that God loves you and is always watching over you. Grace can be likened to everything in the world that is beautiful, noble and pure. It is sunlight that dispels the gloom. It is perfume that destroys all foul odors. It is that delicious tonic that renders your hearts impregnable against fatigue.

Now, little friends, haven't I said a lot of nice things about grace, and just think, they are all true. But over all else reflect: Grace is a pearl more precious than the one Margarita held, and its loss will be attended by sorrow more bitter than that which wrung the heart of the foolish little mermaid.

Don't you remember, little friends, on certain days during the month of April, how your hearts were glad at the coming of gentle spring. The morning perhaps dawned soft and warm. You frolicked about the green in merry mood. Then without warning, a big gloomy cloud came and hid from you the warm sun. Drops of rain began to patter against your face, the moaning winds swept by and chilled you. Then the storm came in torrents. You ran for a place of shelter. You looked out on the scene of your former play, and said hard sayings

about that mean black cloud. Young friends, this represents very well, I think, the little tragedy that takes place in your souls when the blackness of sin destroys the light of grace.

Two small boys stood one day on a corner looking at a poor trolley-car that seemed to be in sore distress. It had remained motionless on the track for a long time. "Why does not the man turn the handle?" said the first lad. "Why, he has it turned," replied his chubby companion. "I cannot see, then, why the car does not move," rejoined the young philosopher. "Why, that is easily explained," his friend made answer. "The current has been broken off at the power-house, so the car is helpless." Now, little friends, as the trolley cannot move without being assisted by the electric flow from the power-house, so neither can you make any progress in the way of saving your souls without divine grace, which is the spiritual motive power.

I am sure you marvel betimes, at the progress some of your companions make in the spiritual life, or even in their studies. They grow more learned and more pious as the days speed by, whilst you perhaps falter by the wayside.

You ask me to solve this puzzle for you.

I will tell you to look to the trolley for the answer. The power from above is turned off. You have not the divine grace with you, which is obtained so easily by prayer.

Why are you so foolish as to forget that your Loving Lord has said, "Without Me you can do nothing." When you recite the sweet "Hail Mary" dwell on the words "full of grace" and you will understand why Mary is so beautiful and so powerful. Now, little friends, I am going to ask you to stand with me for a moment on a well-kept lawn. See how fresh and green it is. How you love to rest your eyes on it. Come with me now a few steps farther. Look beneath the stoop. There you see the grass too. But oh! how different it is, from that so fresh and green you saw a moment ago. It has the air. It has the morning dew. It grows from the same earth. Why, then, alas! is it not redolent and fair? Oh! one thing is wanting. The sunlight does not warm it with its smiles. And so, wearied by its constant gloom, it droops and dies. Ah! yes, and dies.

So it is with the hearts of my little friends while they live in the pure sunlight of God's grace, they continue fair and sweet, as the dews of heaven fall gently upon them. But when they withdraw themselves from

its warmth they become seared and languid and at length, die. Ah ! yes, and die.

Now, many of you youngsters who study arithmetic can do a sum in proportion, so you will grasp the notion when I tell you, that your happiness in this world will ever be just in proportion to the amount of grace that lives within your souls. More grace, more happiness. No grace, no happiness. You have read at times in pious story-books about the saints and martyrs, and you must have wondered how these holy men and women, and in cases, children, could be so austere and yet so merry and jovial to those around them. There was ever a ring of mirth to their laughter, that gladdened the souls who heard it. A soft pure light, too, sparkled in their eyes that told too well the reign of grace within their sinless hearts. Yes, in very truth they held to the true key of happiness,—the life-giving grace of God. Ah ! little friends, the service of your gentle Master is not meant to be galling. It is not meant to be dreary. The inspired writer bids us " taste and see how sweet is the Lord." Moreover, He has invited his little friends to come and find how sweet is His yoke, and how light His burden. Oh ! how comforting the thought that this world which some would call a " vale of tears," can by the magic

of grace be made a real Paradise. If some who have passed a distance along the path of years would term this life "a vale of tears," it is perchance because they stay their eyes on the thorns and brambles which mat the pathway of sin. It is because they have failed to sip the sweetness of grace.

You, little friends, must look further, and you shall hear an inner voice telling you that you were created for real solid happiness in this world as in the next. And this solid happiness will be tasted just as long as the spirit of grace lives within your soul.

Amongst your little "chums" is there not some particular one, who delights you on account of his merry mood? No doubt there is. Well, you just watch that little cherub closely and you will learn that the secret of it all is, that his young heart is free from the taint of sin. That his little feet patter frequently to the source of grace. Each one of you, my little friends, has, I know, the pearl of grace now within his heart. Most children have. But oh! guard it well. Be not so unthinking as poor Margarita. Cling to it, too, as the riper years come upon you.

Should you then be robbed of it, seek it again. It can be redeemed at God's treasure house. Sigh with David, "My soul has

become sad, I will go up unto the altar of God who giveth joy to my youth." I will close with this little verse which I wrote all for you :

Little hearts ! Little hearts ! as you grow from day
to day,
Ah ! life's blossoms will fall withered and leave
thorns along your way.
In the coming years you'll murmur,
Oh ! how empty are life's joys !
And you'll weary of them quickly,
As you do now of your toys.
Little hearts again repeat,
There's joy alone at Jesus' feet,
There's joy alone at Jesus' feet.

The Wonderful Ozone.

THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

THE pretty face of little Hilda Sprong had grown pale and wan. The light had gone out from her bright, blue eyes. Her lips, ever so ruddy, had become blanched and lifeless. The gleaming of the sinking sun lingered on her face as if to invite her wavering soul to fly heavenwards and be at rest. By her bedside, silent and thoughtful, her mother sat, and as the beads wandered through her fingers, her lips moved in earnest prayer.

Little Hilda had long been a sufferer from the dread disease, consumption. Everything that loving hands could do had been done to reclaim the little one from an early grave, but now, it seemed of no avail. Her Heavenly Lord wanted the little angel, and He was leading her gently as the moments passed, unto Himself.

Presently the curtains of Hilda's room were brushed softly to one side and the kind face of a young man gladdened her heart with a smile. His voice too, was soft and sooth-

ing to her restless spirit. "How is my little darling to-day?" he said, as he looked expectant for a reply. But no answer was given him, so he drew near and resting upon one knee, he pushed his fingers with a studied movement through the flaxen curls. It was the young physician who had labored so long to bring his little charge relief. Now he spoke more confidently than before, "Come, look at me, Hilda!" he said, peering into her half-closed eyes.

"See, I have brought with me a wonderful ozone that will coax the bloom again to your pallid cheeks," said he, holding up a queer little phial. Whether Hilda heard him I know not, but her only response was a faint smile that seemed to say, that she was whispering sweet secrets with the angels. After a moment, the young physician placed a silver tube between her languid lips. The poor child began, by degrees, to breathe, slowly and labored at first, but soon an unwonted light started to gleam from her eyes. Now she opened them wide and stared about the room. The glow came gradually to her face, as the tint of morn comes by the eastern sky. Her mother looked on with clasped hands, through scarcely daring to hope.

That night, as the mother sat in loving vigil over her child, a voice whispered to her,

she knew not whence it came, that Hilda would soon be well again. Perhaps it was the Angel Guardian who spoke. As the faithful old clock ticked away the dreary moments, the mother's heart grew in courage. This confidence so soothed her that she fell off to slumber after a time and dreamed that Hilda was skipping gaily through the flowered fields again.

Across the loving old face, there fluttered now and then a smile that seemed like a gleam from the wing of a passing angel. Some strange spirit now drew softly into the room and bending gently over Hilda whispered some secret to her. "Ah! yes," the wasted little girl answered, "I would rather stay awhile. I fain would go with you but I cannot see mother sorrowing."

I knew from these words that the spirit had invited Hilda to fly with her to Paradise. But at her gentle demur, the spirit vanished. Night passed and morning came. The tones of the Angelus bell floated near and roused the little one from slumber. As she looked askance, she saw her faithful old guardian motionless before her, the lamp still throwing its soft halo on her wasted features.

"O mother, awake. Here comes the doctor again," persuasively whispered the little patient, placing her hand softly on that

of her mother. "O, the tale of that spirit was so sweet!" sighed the mother, without opening her eyes. I knew from this that the comforting spirit had confided sweet things to the mother too.

"O," cried Hilda, "I will tell him how grateful I feel for what he has done." She had not time, however, to finish what she intended to say before the good doctor stood at the foot of the bed smiling at her.

"Yes, my little fairy, you are better, and so to-day you must inhale more of that wonderful ozone, for it will bear you over the crisis." A week had scarcely passed when a little girl with ruddy cheeks and cheery laugh was seen to gambol amongst the clover blossoms, as they bowed their glad faces to her. Some of them went so far as to whisper to her, "We're awful pleased to see you again, dearest." The little girl was Hilda.

I know you are just as glad as I am, little friends, to learn that Hilda is better. For it is always a sad thing to hear of death stealing away a little girl whose sinless lips have just begun to lisp the Name of Him she loves the best. I cannot help thinking what a generous heart that young physician had, who labored so ceaselessly to bring Hilda back to perfect health.

Well now, we will bid a sweet adieu to

the doctor and to Hilda. Let us look about us and see if there be any little children whose souls are growing weak and faint. And also if there be at hand a young physician who has such a wonderful ozone for the soul. Yes, I am pleased to say there is. The young physician, you know already. He has spoken to you many times as you ran playfully by His side. I speak of Jesus, friend of the little tots. Has He an ozone, too? Yes indeed, a twofold kind. One is His own flesh and blood, the other is His grace and gentle blessing. The first kind is given to those who are big and strong and must go out in the highway and do battle. The second kind is inhaled by those whose little spiritual systems have not been made accustomed as yet to strong remedies. Isn't that nice! Will He come to me or must I go to Him? Tell me where He keeps this blessed ozone! He will come to you, little friends, if your limpid young minds have already been impressed with the awful holiness of His precious ozone, but you must go to Him, if you have not been introduced to Him, at one of His loving receptions.

First I will say a few words to those of you little folks who have made your first holy communion. Turn your thoughts once again to the happy scene of your First

Communion Day. You recall it with leaping hearts. Don't you? Tell me! must you not confess that of all the moments of your lives so far that one was the sweetest. Do you not recall that feeling of heavenly peace that breathed through your young souls that morning? how near you felt to heaven? You scarcely dared open your eyes or part your lips for fear that something would steal in and mar the purity of your little hearts. Don't you remember, too, how the breath of music swept through every fiber of your being? And the flowers bowed their slender necks and poured out their perfume upon you.

At last, over it all, the little sanctuary bell sprinkled its silver notes and then came the hush of reverence that told your Beloved had come to embrace you with gladness. If an angel had appeared and had snatched you away for a peep into heaven, you could not have been more overjoyed. Now, one by one, the timid tapers flickered out. A gentle hand startled you from your reverie. You passed out of that holy place, as in a procession of little angels. As your young friends kissed you in congratulation, your eyes grew moist, and you betrayed a few little tears, but they spoke of an interior joy. Tell me, was not that the happiest moment

of your lives? I know it was for me. Did you return soon again, children, to see that Lord who is imprisoned for you? As you passed the church, did you say, "Now, I am just going in to have a sweet little heart to heart chat with my Dear Lord," or did the day speed by, only to witness your souls gradually losing the impress of that First Communion Day? I hope not.

You may live many years to come, children. You may sip the sweetness from every blossom that comes by your path. But you never again will feel a thrill of joy more heavenly than that of your first communion day.

I must not forget! I promised I would say a word to the tots who have not tasted of the heavenly ozone as yet. Strange, isn't it?—The Heavenly Physician wants you to toddle to Him. But the journey is not long. He yearns for you to come and see Him in His house, to have a little talk with Him.

Sometime ago I chanced to see a bright little fellow stealing gently to his mother's side and then fondling with her apron strings. At last, encouraged by a sweet glance, he buried his little saddened face in his mother's lap, and told her of some great affliction that had just befallen him. Some boon companion had wounded his loyal heart

because of a blunt refusal to share his chocolate candy. The presence of a red mark, too, on his cheek, betrayed the fact that the erstwhile friend had struck him.

An arm made strong by love now reached out and folded about the young unfortunate. He was lifted up and the balm of a sweet kiss instantly soothed all pain, and the salty tears were dried again. I said to myself—What a strange little Christian that is! instead of bothering his busied mother, why did he not skip away to the tabernacle and drawing close, lisp to the Child's Friend the tale of woe? Then a sweet draught of ozone would have been given, and Our Lord would have been made glad too.

A saintly man once said Our Lord gets jealous when he sees little folk going to others for solace and forgetting Him. It may not be so, but I believe it any way.

Have you never thought, little children, how Jesus dwells in the tabernacle as the days and years pass by, longing for some of His little friends to come to Him. You recall how, when He was on earth, He would seek out the children and play with them in their own fashion. He would do that still, but He cannot. He is imprisoned, and so you must go to Him.

I imagine, as Jesus remains in His House of

Love and sees little feet hurrying by without stopping, that He is made recall His bitter imprisonment in the dungeon of Annas the night before His Passion. You naturally ask, where were all the little folks who grew so fond of Jesus as he walked amongst them? Perhaps the soldiers wouldn't let them in. O yes, that may be.

You have not that excuse, have you, little friends? He longs for his little lovers to-day, so go to Him. They say, but I really doubt it, that a tiny sanctuary lamp one night seeing that no one came to visit Our Lord, began to grow sad at this. "Dear Lord," it whispered, "my life is not very long, it consumes but a few hours, but whatever warmth it has I give it to Thee." I wonder how many little friends of mine can express truthfully this same sentiment to Jesus. I know of one whom each day the twilight sees going to the gate where his Master dwells and saying:

"I wish I were the little key
That locks Love's Captive in
And lets him out to go and free
A sinful heart from sin.

"I wish I were the little bell
That tinkles for the Host
When Christ comes down each day to dwell
With hearts he loves the most.

"I wish I were the little flowers
So near the Host' sweet face,
Or, like the light that through the hours
Burn on the shrine of Grace.

"But, oh! My Lord, I wish the most
That my poor heart may be
A home all holy for each Host
That comes in love to me."

When she had finished this little greeting, I heard a sigh of relief breathe from the tabernacle door. Perhaps I was mistaken, but a voice seemed to say, "I have, at least, one little lover who is true."

The Drama on the Mountain Top.

MORNING OFFERING.

THERE is no use in serious people scoffing at the belief held by so many of us little folks that fairies and goblins and such like, do really exist. Our faith in these creatures of fancy is as old as human nature itself, and that is pretty old, as you all know.

Well, here is a tale of a pretty fairy, and as far as I recollect, I have never told it before. Some children seem to hold to the belief that all fairies are good for, is to frolic and fritter away the hours of life. In truth, this is not quite just, for there are fairies who spend their lives in doing many deeds of kindness, I know.

On the top of a shaggy old mountain (as the story goes) a very comely fairy named Nina once lived. Funny place for a fairy to live, wasn't it! Nobody could tell whence she came. One little fellow declared that he saw her drop from a star one still night, but no one believes that now. However, it is said that she warded off from the village people below, many a lightning stroke, and

veered away many an angry storm. This is doing good, I am sure. Well, the sweet days of summer came and went. Autumn had just begun to give her delicate tints to the leaves when a strange thing happened, so I am told by one who saw it.

Darkness was creeping on and the birds were twittering their good-nights to one another as they settled in their nests, when Nina came softly out of her hiding-place on the mountain top. She looked stealthily about her for an instant to make sure that no one was nigh, then fixed her gaze on the pale moon as he pushed his way lazily through the mists of night. She began, after a time, to sing to the moon a sweet song, the melody of which I have since forgotten. When the the last echo had lost itself in the valley, she stooped down and picking up a curious old vase, she held it at arm's length and touching it with her wand, she took up the thread of her song, and began to chant more sweetly than ever. From the neck of the vase there now began to curl out slowly, a fume of the sweetest odor. It coiled itself into different forms for the time, that were indeed wonderful to behold. At last, it took the guise of an angel and so real was it that I waited breathlessly for it to speak, but it did something more wonderful than speak. It rose

in the air, as a spirit leaving the body. I could see the fairy nowhere now, nor was the vase visible. But the newly-formed angel soared higher and heavenward and I saw in its snow-white hands, a cluster of precious pearls, where they came from I could never tell. The moon now stopped and looked over his specs at the strange event, and what do you think: his dreamy eyes met mine as I stared upward.

His round face broadened into a smile, for I must have appeared ridiculous. "Did you see that wonderful thing?" I asked. "Yes, yes," said the moon, seemingly amused at my bewilderment. "But if you saw that little drama as often as I, perhaps it would not excite you so much. I behold it every night I roam the sky. And I am surprised, little chubby," he said, looking at me with eyes that opened many miles wide, "that you do not know that you possess a power just as wonderful as that fairy." Then he pushed his big face behind a cloud, as though he were pouting at me.

I now scrambled down the mountain-side almost forgetting my own name, so wrought up was I. As my feet touched the plain, I met, face to face, a comely shepherd-boy, playing on his lute to woo slumber. I told him of my weird experience and how the

moon had scolded me. He must have been a pious boy, for, throwing his arms fondly about me, he thus unraveled my story: "Your good Father in Heaven," said he, talking as would a young priest, "has allowed this little drama to drift into your life for a purpose. Each event you have seen has attached to it a symbol.

"The fairy on the mountain peak, pictures the sinless child, who is just so prominent in God's eyes. He beholds him night and day. That child, too, has the power of warding off evils from those about him by the magic incense of prayer." "'Tis well, good shepherd," said I, "but what of the vase and the angel? O, tell me of them." "The fairy holding out the vase with eyes fixed sweetly on the heavens, is a figure of the child who hold, up a spiritual vase each morning to his Lord in Heaven, and lisps the fervent prayer: 'Accept from me, Gentle Master, all my thoughts, words and actions of this day.' And the angel of that little one, fluttering to Heaven offers the gift of that young heart at the Throne of Grace. Thus, do I pray each morning as I roam the plains with my sheep." "But, why did the moon scold me for not knowing all this?" asked the child, laying his hand softly on the shepherd's arm. But the little chap felt that

the moon's big eyes were still on him, so he kissed the young shepherd in gratitude and scampered off homeward a wiser and better boy.

I know not where the chubby little chap now lives who had so thrilling an experience on the mountain top. If I did, I would press him to come and tell you in better form than I have done, what wondrous things he beheld on that memorable night. I rather think, though, he is dead, since the facts of the tale I tell happened quite fifty years ago.

But now when I reflect, I wonder why the world should have grown so excited over a fairy transforming a fume into an angel, which I doubt was an angel at all. You, little folks, can do something just as magical by the power of your wills. You can change your ordinary actions of the day into so many golden grains by simply making your morning offering, by saying at the dawn of each day as the shepherd boy was wont to do: "My Saviour, all that I do and suffer this day will be for love of you."

St. John, the beloved disciple, tells us that in one of his visions he saw spirits of surpassing beauty standing before the throne of God. In their hands they clasped golden phials and from these there breathed the

sweetest odors, and these he tells us were the offerings of daily prayers and deeds that came from sainted little hearts who dwelt on earth.

Now I suppose you want me to tell you just in what form you should address your daily offerings. Well, just as soon as your little eyes open from their slumber, thank God for having preserved you during the night, to bless Him another day. Then, as the birds begin to twitter near your window and the sun begins to spread his glory through the world, think how good your Lord is and how little He asks of you. Then say: "O my Saviour! I offer to Thee this day all that I am, and all that I may do. Every prayer and sigh and word and work, will be for love of Thee." Then frequently during the day, let your little minds drift back to the moment of prayer. As you romp about in your merry games, you can blend with your notes of laughter the words of St. Paul: "Whatever I do this day in word or work, I will do in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ." Your every movement will thus receive a spiritual coloring, your every little smile or prank will be as pleasing to your Lord as though you spent the day on your knees before His tabernacle.

There once lived an old Philosopher, who

though very learned, was yet very poor. Neither had he a fixed abode, but wandered through the world teaching to mankind the secret of real happiness. However, he never felt the pang of want, and he was ever in merry mood. This is the reason why. He carried with him a curious stone which held the secret power of turning whatever substance it touched into rarest gold. They say that in his latter days he grew very wealthy but, unlike most rich men, he remained very wise. Now, little friends, you have no such magic stone in your bosoms. But, by the power of this little morning sigh, you can lay up in your little bank in heaven, grains of gold that will be used to adorn your crown when you shall have been called home by the Master.

Many of the saints, we are told, wept as they saw, now and then, the indifference of men in regard to their eternal salvation. "See," said they, "how men toil to grasp the gold of earth. But alas! in Heaven they have stored no treasures. "O, what doth it profit a man to gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?" This is the question you must put to yourselves when tempted to run after earthly gain to the neglect of your soul's treasures.

I am going to close this little talk, children,

by telling you of a sweet little drama that I had the good fortune to witness myself :—As I knelt in the sanctuary one morning, a gentle sigh came breathing through the holy air. I turned my eyes and I saw two little hands clasped in earnest prayer. Two tear-stained little eyes sent their pleading to the tabernacle. The young stranger must have caught an echo of the Master's sweet words: "Come to me, all ye who labor, and are heavily burdened."

A few moments elapsed and the noise of soft footfalls sounded through the church. Closer did they come, until they ushered in a little girl of ten summers. She was fair of face and prettily dressed. Her tiny fingers clasped a bouquet of roses. The little form swung haughtily past the figure in prayer and going straightway to the altar, she laid the flowers on the spotless cloth. She then turned and scampered out again into the busy street. Now, I noticed a sadness very strange had come over the boy's face. "O Lord," he sighed, "I have no flowers to give you. But beneath my tattered coat I hold a heart that loves You. Take it and keep it always." He then lifted his sleeve to brush away a tear, and you know, children, tears do not always bespeak sorrow.

I think, without me saying a word, you

know which of these two gifts was the more pleasing to our Saviour. I who am having this little chat with you, my little friends, may never see you in the world. But let us both work to offer, not only a passing day but our entire lives to serving the Master who loves us so. Then, although never possessing the gold of the world, we will have stored an abundance of heavenly treasure, which will be ours to enjoy when this short strife is ended.

The Piper-Fox.

TEMPTATION.

THOUSANDS of miles away from here, there is another planet, so they say, poised in the air just as this earth is, upon which there live only birds and animals of every type and some other queer creatures that have not been named as yet. I have no doubt the animals who dwell on this far-off sphere have about the same tricks and tendencies, as those who roam hereabout in our own woodlands. In fact, I not only surmise it, I know it surely. For the following little tragedy will prove it.

It was told to me by a dusty moth who, fearing the sentence of death for some misdeed, fluttered away, and after flying for months and months, reached the earth and so came across me. He was a cute, talkative little chap, very interesting indeed. This is the story he told me of a deceitful old fox who, I am now convinced, is related to that same family of sly rascals who live on our planet.

It is said that foxes love romances, any-

thing in fact, to break the monotony of life. So thus the old villain of whom I speak, thought that he could gain entrance into the birdie's bower, if he were to garb himself, as a fairy. Now, what do you think of that? So one day the moth said, with the help of a friendly kangaroo, he dressed himself in a flimsy gown, and so well was the work done, that it passed under the closest inspection, as you will learn. Daybreak had scarcely flung its gleam across the eastern sky when Mr. Fox crept through the thicket, and no one, I feel sure, would ever doubt that he was a real fairy, so prettily was he attired. Under his arm, he held a silver pipe. Whence he got it, goodness knows. He skipped across the brook just as nimbly as a water-spite.

After a time, he began to play on his pipe. The music was strange in tone, yet you could call it quite sweet. Now, you must know that Miss Moth is a critic of music. Indeed, flocks of birds sat on the nearest limbs to listen to the piping fairy. The sleepy-head rabbits, too, stuck up their ears and thought to themselves, "Who can this early minstrel be?" But here, little friends, I must remark the strongest feature of all was this, that the old fox's music had the power of spell-binding. It held those

who listened to it in a perfect enchantment so that even though they willed it or not, they were bound to follow the old rascal whithersoever he chose to lead them.

After an hour or so, many hundreds of twittering birds and frisky chipmunks, were skipping after the piper-fox, through branch and over hedge, just as children in crowds follow the street players now-a-days, forgetful of their homes. Never a bit did he slacken his tune, nor even once did he look behind him for fear he would be recognized. By this time, he was drawing near to the gates of wicker that stood before his castle. He ceased at length to play, and bowing low, invited all those who had followed him to enter and share a sumptuous meal. But never a foot did one of them stir."

"I am so glad of that!" said I. "But wait," said Miss Moth, catching again the thread of her story. "At this juncture, the rascal in fairy dress took up his pipe again, and began to toot the strangest air that ever rang through the forest of that planet far away. As he did so, he danced through the gates himself, and lo! with him tumbled the birds and rabbits as though unable to cast the spell from them! Now they had entered," sighed Miss Moth, with a sweet sigh that I just could hear.

"The grinning old fox at this time laughed aloud with a wicked laugh, and throwing off his disguise, said, 'Now you are in my power, pretty ones! The winter is coming on and I need food,' and so many of the poor birdies were put to death. But the old fiend had no heart, for even then did he play on his pipe and make merry as before."

This doleful tale having been confided to me, Miss Moth fluttered away from the palm of my hand whereon she had been sitting as she spoke. The last I saw of her she was sailing straightway for the river. Suddenly she faded from my view. I have not since seen her. I hope no harm has befallen her, for the story she told me will ever live in my memory.

How I grieve when I think what a sad ending these poor little birds had. Their lives were so merry, their death so lonely. But just think, little friends, how much sadder it would have been had this fate befallen children instead of birds or rabbits. For this reason, I rejoice that no child inhabits that far-off sphere.

Now, do not grow alarmed when I tell you that a calamity just as sad comes betimes, upon little folks who dwell upon the earth; mind you, not little birds, but little folks. This is what I mean:—The Devil, the prince

of foxes, stalks out of his gloomy abode each day, and robing himself in finery that he thinks will catch the fancy of some poor child, he goes along the highways of life playing a tune very like the one the fox played. He paints sin in the most gaudy colorings and, sad to say, many children are beguiled and skip to his piping and thus become slaves to his power, as the birds did to the fox's. But, unlike your little feathery friends, you children may be tempted but you cannot become bewitched. The old deceiver may cast his spells about you, but prayer, and the sign of the cross, can break them all.

Prayer, then, will ever be your shield through which Satan cannot send his poisonous darts. You have, perchance, seen a hailstorm. How those little stones sting your face when they strike it! But if you raise your umbrella, then you can laugh to yourself as they patter away on its roof in a feeble attempt to reach you. Temptation, then, you must know, is but a hailstorm. And prayer is your shield, your umbrella, to ward it off.

Here again, I cannot help turning my thoughts to these poor little birds, their fate has so depressed me. Ah! had they been wise, they would have said to themselves

when they realized they were being beguiled from their happy glens, "No, we will never leave our bower of quiet and peace to follow a stranger, for heaven knows whither he is going to lead us." So you, little friends, if you are truly wise, will not run after the tempter's bidding, no matter how sweet it may appear. For the end is ever the same, tears and remorse.

O! I wish I could make you realize that the tempter is ever lurking about in dark places so that you might be the more watchful. Yes, watchful is the word, for we who are older can assure you that your temptations are going to extend beyond the pale of childhood. So you must become schooled in the art of self-defense. Learn how to repel the old Fox, the Devil, so that he may never deceive you away from beneath Christ's mantle of gentle care that is now tenderly held over your curly little heads.

I once heard of a merry little lad who sailed away in a vessel, the sails and body of which were of dazzling white. An angel, it is said, guided this craft for a time, leading it along softly by silken cords. At length, I know not why, the silly boy cut these cords and the angel soared heavenward.

For a time, the timid craft moved along,

truly as before. But after many hours, a monster whom I have since learned was Scylla, stood on the shore. She cast an assuring smile at the young sailor, who, thinking her his friend, steered his bark within range of her ponderous arms.

She instantly took the helm and striking the boy dumb by some weird passes, she veered his bark into the whirlpool of Charybdis. Here the waters boiled and foamed as though stirred by a devil's trident. In a twinkling, that pretty little vessel, guided but a few hours ago by an angel hand, was dashed with its precious burden into a thousand fragments. The moral of this tale is plain, little friends. Once you turn from the angel of grace and allow yourselves to be lead by temptation into the power of the devil, your ruin will be rapid and inevitable.

Holy persons have ever called this life a warfare. This terming may seem strange to you now. At present, life appears full of peace and merriment. As yet, you cannot grasp what baneful effects follow on the yielding to temptation. But your little hearts will not ever be so. Later years will reveal to you the fact that life is one continual struggle between the powers of your souls and the base tendencies of your bodies.

And wise and peaceful of heart will be ever, he, who fights temptation and keeps his soul untainted by sin.

I am rather sorry now, little friends, that I told you that temptation will taunt you through future years. I had rather left you innocent of this vexing prospect. But never mind, why should I worry since I know you will be brave?

The Angel Raphael once said to Tobias, "Because thou are acceptable to God, it is necessary that temptation should prove these." Now I see it all. Your Father in Heaven wishes you to be proven a good soldier in this life, so that your crown may be the brighter in the world to come. A very sweet little saint advises boys and girls never to trifle with temptation. I wonder what he can mean. Now it dawns on me. He wishes to tells us, that we should never allow the tempter to argue with us. For, in his cunning way, he can make us view sin through the wrong end of the telescope, so that it will appear very trifling.

Here is another little bit of advice for my little friends. You must keep aloof from the persons and occasions that prove a source of temptation to you. I would blush to think you had no more sense than the silly moth who, with his flimsy wings, goes soar-

ing about the flame, encircling it closer and closer, until finally, he is drawn in and scorched to a crisp. The moral of all this is plain enough.

The first form of temptation I think you will experience as you pass along the years, will be that of thought. As you sit, lost in dreaming some day, the devil will steal close by you and drop into your little mind some fantasy that will not be very nice. What will you do then? Why, just beat the old boy at his own game. Just begin to fill up your busy brains with chaste and holy thoughts.

Think of the sweetness of Mary. Dwell on the beauty of Jesus. Bless yourself reverently. And then, just as a cork will rise to the brim of a vessel and pass away when you fill that vessel with water; so will unclean thoughts be forced out of your minds, as you fill them with the pure waters of pious meditation.

Little friends, I will never be forced to admit that children can be cowards. Never! Still I have heard it said that some of them grow weary now and then of following their Divine Master along the thorny way. "How long, O Lord, must I keep up this combat," some have been heard to sigh. If such there be, now really, I cannot condemn him.

It is hard to be ever clad in mail and tasses, to be fighting day after day. But never mind, you are fighting under a Leader who has once laid down His life for you and the least you might do in return is to show loyalty to His standard.

Then too, He tells every little soldier who toddles after Him as He told St. Paul of old, "My grace is sufficient for thee." And He says, "Call to me in time of trouble." Reflect again, little friends, that through all your life, you will never be tempted above your strength. Therefore, if you let the old Fox conquer you, it will be because you are cowardly and wanting in vigilance. You have a gentle Mother, too, in Mary. When you hear the voice of temptation, run to Mary, she will throw her arms about you, so that you can neither hear nor see the tempter. Then you may be sure of remaining unharmed. Remember, finally, little dears, that in the bright Heaven above you there is a golden crown awaiting you. If you be valiant in conquering the tempter now, that crown will one day be placed upon your head before the court of Paradise. O, this is a prize, surely, worth striving for! St. James declares this crowning shall surely take place, "When he hath been proven, he shall receive the crown of life." So:

"Fear not, my child!
Though the waves are white and high
And the storm blows wild
Through the gloomy sky;
On the edge of the western sea
See the line of golden light
Is the haven bright
Where home is awaiting thee;
When this peril passed,
We shall rest from our stormy voyage
In peace at last."

The Pelican's Good Deed.

VILE WORDS AND JESTS.

As everybody knows and is ready to admit, in the long ago there were birds and snails and serpents that could talk; not, forsooth, in a language which children could fathom, but in a funny jargon understood by themselves alone. Some folks posing as very wise will question the truth of what I say, but no child will doubt my word for a reason so slight as that. So here is my story:—and if you find it untrue, I will not expect you to ever believe me again.

In far-off Arabia, the land of weird happenings and uncanny things generally, an old Sultan once lived, and as is usually the case with Sultans, he had about his palace every delight that one's heart could pant for, and that means a great deal. There were wonders peculiar to royal life that story-books for children especially, could never mention. Here the wizard old ruler found time to give reign to the unruly longings of his heart, and these were very many. Now, this stony-

hearted old sovereign had a son whose name I will not attempt to pronounce. Report still has it that, unlike his father, the son was sweet-tempered, and held in contempt those pastimes in which his progenitor reveled. For this do I laud the son, whatever his name may be. Now, notwithstanding the goodness of his offspring, the royal old father was very cruel to his son. He even forced him apart from the palace and made him live in a little rustic house that was better fitted as a dwelling-place for spooks than for a child.

The little fellow, too, had to study strange problems about the moon and stars, and so you will not wonder, when you hear that he would sit at night by the hour on a stile and look curiously up at the planets, and then again at the reflection in the water. Why he did this I am not able to explain. Men of figures are wont to do strange things at all times, you know.

One night, he sat in the haunted place I have already mentioned and peered up at the moon so intently, I thought surely it had enchanted him. But no! for, after a time, I noticed his head drop upon his breast and he fell fast asleep. A queer-looking old bird perched above him and opened its eyes very wide as it stared at him in a funny sort of

way. It seemed to say, "What a foolish boy that is to sleep out in this place so infested by lizards and reptiles." But it was mean of that old bird not to warn the unconscious slumberer of his danger. So I will never think well of old birds again.

Pretty soon a graceful phantom of purest white began to glide over to the lonely boy. As it drew closer, I could see it was a downy pelican. It rustled its wings a few times and the boy awoke. Now you may not believe me, little friends, but the pelican began to speak in the oriental language:

"Do not sit here, little stranger," it said, turning its head queerly to one side. "Over yonder, a brood of serpents skulk in hiding. Should one of them come hither and hiss at you as you sleep, your fair face would be blighted forever.

At this revelation, the young listener's eyes opened as large as toad-stools. He seemed really to have understood what the pelican had said. "Can I believe my ears!" was all he could gasp. Just then a hissing sound came close to him. "The serpent! The serpent!" he muttered. "The pelican spoke aright. I must run away." And so his little feet went in haste to his castle of tanglewood. And I am glad to say the wicked reptile did not mar his youthful

beauty, thanks to the pelican's timely warning.

Now, when the selfish old Sultan heard of what a good service the pelican had rendered to his son, he decreed that it should be fed on golden corn ever afterwards. In the course of years, it is stated that the noble bird consumed many millions worth of golden corn, but no matter ; he had deserved it. The ruler too, sent a message to the crown-heads of every kingdom in the then-known world, telling them what a precious bird he has found the pelican to be.

From that day to this, the pelican, as you have noticed, will not deign to swim in the same pond with a duck or a goose. It must have crystal water of its own, and golden corn, at least. I am glad to tell you too, that on the next day the ill-fated son was received by his royal father into the castle and placed in a gorgeous room. So you see after all, the pelican has had a hand in making the history of the world and in molding the destinies of nations.

I will always be kind to pelicans whenever I meet them in future for they are thoughtful and true.

Now I would like to be as thoughtful and unselfish as the white pelican. So I am going to warn you, little friends, of a certain danger

that lurks in your path and perhaps to which you have given little heed heretofore. The poisened sting of a serpent is indeed, something to be dreaded by every child. But the moral sting of an unclean tongue is an evil against which you should guard yourselves no less diligently.

We know that the most deadly of reptiles are often found loitering near the sweetest of flowers, so too, do we not infrequently find children of unclean speech among the purest and most guileless of little ones. I grieve to talk in this way, but experience has opened my eyes. Now, I am very well aware that there are not many young folks, who bear the glad title "Friend of the Child Jesus," who knowingly use words or jests that are immodest. But as you pass along the streets to and from your homes, you may perchance meet with those who are unguarded in speech and who give voice, now and then, to jests at which a good child would be forced to blush.

What a pity this is! and how frequently nowadays are the guardian angels made to weep, as they turn away their ears. But perhaps you will say, "O yes! It is true I have heard some children using evil words, but that would never have any effect on my mind or heart.

Do not be so confident, little friends. You cannot knowingly hearken to immodest words without, in a degree, being affected by them. You have heard of some of your little neighbors, going through woodland and dell, picking flowers. Some quick, little eye will catch sight of a slender green vine, that creeps softly up the side of a moldering rock. Instantly a tiny hand, spotless perhaps as a lily, will reach out to pluck the leaves that are so enticing. There is no evidence of taint on the moment, but after a few fleeting hours a feverish rash will have spread over that little hand, then a painful swelling will show itself. Then only does the unthinking little chap whisper to himself, "Alas! I am poisoned!"

Very like this does moral poison act, little friends. Be wary then of the first contact if you would keep your young hearts free from the moral taint of poison.

In the long ago, those poor wretches, upon whom had fallen the loathsome malady called leprosy, were forced to hold aloof from the wholesome people of the city, and whenever they had occasion to approach the gates, they were forced to call out in a voice trembling in sadness, "Unclean! Unclean!" so that those untouched by the plague could hasten away ere they came within the zone

of danger. How just it would be, if the evil speaker were to be treated as the lepers were in days of old! How meet it would be, if all their companions would call out as they drew nigh, "Unclean! Unclean!"

If it is true that "from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," how devoid of all purity and sweetness must be the hearts of those children who are ever voicing vile words and lewd jests.

One day, as I stood by the casement, I held up a glass of pure and limpid water and let the sun's golden rays pour through it. Instantly, it seemed to me as though a thousand diamonds had sprung into life. For, on the moment, there began to sparkle, what seemed to me, gems of a myriad form and color. They seemed every instant to change their variety and hue.

And so, I mused to myself, how hidden and unknown are the beauties of nature, when her simplest creatures are so surpassingly lovely. But I had scarcely finished my reflections when, in placing the glass on the desk, I let fall into it a few drops of ink. Alas! the virgin water which an instant before had so charmed my soul, now disgusted me, for it had become murky and ugly, and I sighed, "This is indeed a type of a sinless young soul whose purity is suddenly

smirched by having breathed in the foul words of unchastity. And I have since learned that my reflections were correct.

At Christmas time, little friends, when our thoughts are borne to Bethlehem by the wings of angels, we marvel at the privilege that was given to the young shepherd boys, of drawing nigh to the Divine Infant and kissing his little forehead, while tears of gratitude glistened on their hardy cheeks. And yet how closely allied to this, is the grace that is bestowed on you, dear children, of having that same sweet Divine Child rest upon your hearts in Holy Communion. O, how chaste should be the lips and sinless the hearts that are to be the reposing place of Him before whom the angels seem not without stain!

And yet, here is where your hearts will sigh. Are there not some little Christians who will give voice every day in the week to words and jests that savor of unchastity and then on "Grace Day" draw nigh to the "Feast of Love," while even the echoes of their sordid words have scarcely died away.

O what a wretched child must be he who would do this! For myself, I do not believe that a child of that type thrives in this part of the world. Still, I have heard that such do.

I see betimes, as I steal into the "Master's House," little hands placing lilies near the tabernacle. Let your lips always, little friends, be as the calix of that lovable flower, white, and spotless, and your hearts like its rod, shining like gold, with the love of all that is pure and clean in this life.

I know of many little boys and girls who, before they run off to school each morning, will throw their tiny arms about their mothers' neck and kiss them good-bye for the day. I wonder if some mothers would bestow this mark of affection on their children if they knew how soiled those tiny lips had become with the use of sordid words. I am sure they would not.

You have seen, I am sure, the touching picture of St. John, the young and fair disciple whom Jesus loved, and who, above all, had the privilege of resting his head on the bosom of Our Dear Lord, on the night of His Passion. Why was this sign of tenderness given to the Beloved Disciple? It was, I am sure, because no word of defilement had ever passed his lips and no thought of sin had ever tainted his soul. If you would draw so near Our Blessed Lord, then, little friends, let your words and thoughts be ever as St. John's were.

If there be one of my young listeners who

has been using evil words or jests heretofore, I ask that one to reflect. Take your crucifix in your hand. See the wounds made in the virginal brow of your Saviour. See how His sweet lips are bruised and swollen. These pains he suffered to expiate your sins of vile word. Do not, for His sake, open those wounds again, but rather kiss them tenderly as the tears of regret start to your eyes.

The Minotaur.

THE CROSS.

I WAS reclining in an arm-chair, one evening in my study, just at twilight. My eyes were lightly closed; and through my mind there came coursing fantasies of those things I had been reading in my ancient history. Suddenly, there stood before me, what I took to be an angel. But, then, I mused, I had not the piety requisite for such a gracious visitor. Who the visitor was I cannot tell—if one at all. Without adieu, he began to narrate a tale that at first made my blood chill. But it all ended so happily I vowed I would tell it to you, little friends, the first chance I got:—

"It seems, said the spirit, "that on the island of Crete, there lived a certain dreadful monster. This hideous being was shaped partly like a man and partly like a bull. It was such an unsightly sort of creature that it is really disagreeable to think of him. He had been placed there by the tyrant Crudelis, many years before;

and thither this vile monarch would send those children who in any way displeased him and the minotaur would devour them."

King Crudelis, held sway for fifty years, and then died—you won't shed any tears at that news, I am sure—but during his reign, the man-brute grew and grew until latterly, even an army of soldiers could not overcome him. Knowing that the whole of Greece lay trembling at his feet, the minotaur laughed with a coarse laugh that shook the hills and ruffled the waters for miles around.

But he declared—no thanks to him—that he would not destroy the nation, provided that once a year, ten of the fairest maidens of Greece be sent to him on which to sate his passion for blood. What a horrid old fiend he must have been! Now for five weary years, had his wish been complied with—and many were the fair lassies whose tender forms he strewed along the sands of the shore. Then the sea would come and gently lift their mangled bodies and take them unto her bosom. The sea is good-hearted, after all.

Now the day of misery had again rolled around when by lot, ten slender victims were to be chosen. The sobs and groans

and shrieks with which the city was filled were, in truth, awful, for each fond parent feared her daughter might be chosen. And the damsels themselves were chilled with terror as the fateful hour drew nigh.

By nightfall, the allotment had taken place, and the maidens on whom had fallen the hand of fate stood on the shore like resolute martyrs, waiting amidst the muffled groans of loved ones, for the black-sailed craft to bear them away forever. Presently an outcry startled the stricken crowd. The clatter of horses' feet grew each moment more distinct. Now, through the somber line of trees, there came dashing a gallant knight. From his helmet there flowed a delicate plume of the chastest white. On the breast of his armor, a cross of gold showed its form in the gentle moonlight. His features were passing fair and inspiring. "Hold, my timid damsels," he cried, with a ringing voice, and he drew a flaming sword from its scabbard.

"You weep, you tremble at the call of the minotaur. But he shall not harm you more! In this sign shall you conquer!" quoth he, holding on high a cross that threw a calm light on the thousands of upturned faces.

They say there are no words in any lan-

guage strong enough to set forth the wild joy that followed on this thrilling speech, and I don't doubt it.

Now almost unobserved, there stole unto its moorings the minotaur's vessel, like a phantom-ship, and its sails were of deepest black. "Come, my damsels," said the noble stranger, "let us embark. We will sail across the sea, but mark ye, in this sign shall we conquer the dragon of blood." And so to the vessel did they move, these slender maidens—not with tears and laments as of yore, but with peans of joy. Along the cliff-heights stood the populace with searching eyes till the boat passed into the night. But the echoes that stole back over the slumbering sea told that a song of victory was being chanted.

The hours tolled slowly by. No one slumbered that night throughout all Greece. But morning came at last and from the cliffs, thousands of anxious eyes scanned across the awakening deep. "Behold!" in one breath came the cry. "Behold, a craft tends hither, but its sails are of white and on them is blazoned a cross of gold. Hearken! the waves hasten to us, the sound of a song of triumph. O, can it be our maidens fair? Could the strange knight have slain the man-brute, as he said, and

delivered our daughters?" But as they spoke, the specter-ship came modestly into the shore. "Thank God!" came the cry, first from the King and then the populace took up the mighty refrain. The brave knight stood at the bow, and as the thousands of overjoyed souls swarmed to embrace the damsels, the young deliverer became enveloped in dazzling light, rose heavenward, and was seen no more. And now for the first time did one and all exclaim in breathless awe, "It was an angel who has come to our aid! He has killed the minotaur by his magic sign." For many days were feasts of joy held throughout the kingdom.

During the telling of the above story, I could move neither hand nor foot, so wonder-struck was I. When at last, it was finished, I sprang to my feet but nowhere could I see trace of my spirit-visitor. After looking through the pages of many histories of Greece, I failed to find any annals of a happening such as I have told you. But for myself, I believe what I heard on that memorable evening. I am really glad the minotaur is dead lest he escape over the seas and harm you, my little friends. But don't forget that the spiritual minotaur still prowls about the world "seeking

whom he may devour." And as the angel said to the maidens, "Behold the cross! In that sign you shall conquer," so do I say to you," In the sign of the cross you have a talisman at the sight of which the devils will recoil in dread, by it you shall conquer them."

Most of your little hands are too slender to wield a sword as yet, young friends, or do great things with it. Still, you have a weapon in the cross, that can hold at bay the dragons that would tear you to pieces.

In tales of Arabia, we read how magicians by the wielding of a wand, did marvels—that made children all over the world open their eyes in wonder. Now, do you know that you hold within your sinless souls and untarnished hands a sign that makes their exploits seem dwarfed indeed. Theirs was a devilish power, yours is born of heaven.

I am quite sure that if you once could grasp the extent of the glory of the cross, you would feel, forsooth, a holy pride in living under its shadow. I wonder if your frivolous little minds have ever thought much on the cross—you see it so often. You behold it raised aloft on the spire of your church to tell souls wearied with sin, where the "House of Peace" is. You see it

above the tabernacle. You have it dangling from your beads. Who has thrown about the cross the sanctity with which it is clothed now? Ah! it is Our Blessed Lord, Himself. He chose it as the instrument of our salvation. The cross was His pillow in the death-agony. It sipped His precious blood—it listened to His last sigh. How sweet it should be, then, to His little followers who love Him so. Indeed, little friends, the cross is so woven into the meshes of your young hearts, that you cannot very well get away from it. When Almighty God ushered you into the world, he had placed on your little brows by one of his shepherds, the sign of the cross. You were then branded as one of His tiny lambs. After the few sweet days of babyhood sped away, the cross threw about you its influence again in the form of Confirmation. You are young and mirthful now and I do not want to breathe of a subject that would make you wrinkle your little brows, but just let me remark that when the shadows of death begin to fold you into your final slumber, the cross will again be placed in your fading hands as the minister of grace traces this same comforting sign upon your brows. And then, when the angel has called you away, it will be in the form of a

cross that your spiritual Mother will kiss you farewell. And what about your little grave? Above that, too, loving hands will rear a cross—maybe of lasting stone, perhaps of fading wood. It matters not, be it only a cross, for it shall stand through the years as a faithful sentinel to watch over you, to throw its hallowed shadows over you when all else shall have fled.

Now you see, little friends, how sweetly the effects of the cross pervade every fiber of your being. You are beginning to grasp now, I trust, the sanctity and power of the cross. Here let me whisper a question, "How do you make that sign before and after prayers?" Is it the first act you perform in the morning as you awaken? Answer these little questions within your own little hearts, for I would not make you blush with a possible consciousness of guilt.

You may remark here, "How is it that people always speak of sorrow and trouble and those unwelcome things as crosses?" Well, while the cross has its glories, rewards and consolations, it entails a little self-denial, of course. See what an amount of pain it brought to Your Dearest Friend. Yet Good Friday was soon followed by Easter morn. Yes, I must say, upon the

shoulders of every Christian child there is tenderly laid, sooner or later, a cross. But will we not be true to our pledges, to be resigned followers of Our Saviour? Yes, trudge after Him with your little burden, the journey will not be so long. The Master sees it all and awaits you at the mountain top. Arrived there, He will lift it from your bruised shoulders, soothe your brow with His caresses—then can you rest for evermore.

Stand close to your cross, then. Through the years of life never be untrue to your standard. It is a glorious sight to see young boys playing soldiers—Their steps are quickened by the first impulse of that spirit of patriotism, yet they know it not under that name. The flag! The Stars and Stripes! O, that is what makes their pent-up feelings burst forth in rollicking cheers.

You, little friends, are the best of patriots because you are the loyalest of Catholics. You have been taught to love the standard of your country in your class-room, but do not forget that there is a standard that floats still higher in the Heavens than your national one. It is that of your faith, the Cross of Your Saviour. If you grow enthused over the first, do not

be less fervid over the latter. Love the flag of your country—reverence the ensign of your holy religion—and you will be children of whom your seniors will be proud.

The Frog and the Lily.

DEATH.

A FRISKY young frog, dressed in his shining coat of speckled green, stood one morning on the edge of a jagged old stone. From his manner of acting, I should judge he was very conceited, for now and then, he would twist his head in a queer sort of a way and look down on the surface of the dreaming waters, as a young damsel would gaze into a mirror. He smiled a conscious smile, then lifted his head and peered across the fields as though he yearned for some playmates to come and share his joy. He was a sociable frog at least. But, do you know, being early in the morning, not even a bird or fish was yet astir; so the frisky frog passed the moments in thinking foolish thoughts.

"Here I am," he said, "youthful and handsome. I really think, unlike other creatures, I shall never die." So he laughed and danced in a grotesque way. He became, after a while, very quiet, and lifting his web foot to his ear, he murmured,

"Hello, I hear some one calling me! but my! how sweet and soft is the voice." Again the call, "Good-morning, Mr. Frog," sailed softly over the lake.

"Well! well! If it isn't my delicate darling, Miss Water Lily, calling me!" So he straightway dove into the stream, and was soon by Miss Water Lily's side. "Well, you little darling," said he, "how fresh and fair you look this morning." Miss Water Lily bowed her head modestly. "Do you know, I was just thinking to myself what a distasteful thought darkness and death is. O, I love sunlight and life!"

"I, too," gently whispered Miss Water Lily.

"Ah, yes. I think you and I are too fair and young to die," rejoined Mr. Frog.

"Perhaps we shall be exempt from that baneful decree," said Miss Lily, meekly.

"Yes, I feel as though I could live on forever," broke in Mr. Frog, inflating his chest to the utmost extent.

"O, see!" said Miss Water Lily, ruffling her brow. "What is this immense white creature gliding towards us? I hope it will not harm us." Mr. Frog stood on his hind legs, then laughed at the seeming childishness of Miss Water Lily. "Why, you slender darling," said he, striving to quiet

her fears," that is a sailboat. I can vouch it as harmless. See how it throws out its white wings as though it would gladly soar through the air. Hearken to the merry laughter of the children, as it moves over the waters. Lo, what fair-haired youth is at the helm; see his soft locks as the breeze gently plays through them."

"They are, in truth, veering this way," now gasped Mr. Frog, as fear shone from his filmy eyes. "Miss Water Lily, my dear damsel, you will pardon me if I leave you abruptly," stammered out Mr. Frog. "You know self-safety is a law I respect very much. That delicate hand you see outstretched and seemingly so harmless, has lurking within it a deadly grasp." With no further adieu, Mr. Frog now dove into the pond and was soon lost to sight. Miss Water Lily grew steadily paler, but seemed unable to move as the white vessel like a specter bore down upon her. She bethought herself to plunge beneath the surface too, but, "Alas," she sighed, "I know not how to swim."

By this time, the slender hand had reached out and folding its flexible fingers firmly about Miss Lily's neck, pulled her forth, roots and all, and a whisper exclaimed, "How fair you are!" Two blue little eyes

looked out into her languishing face, as she grew more faint each moment. The rays of the noonday sun threw their wilting heat upon her.

Scarcely five minutes had passed before Miss Water Lily's freshness had vanished. Mr. Frog by this time was perched on the pinnacle of a jagged stone and looked on from afar. He whimpered as he said: "Alas, how quickly the fair and young pass away!" Just then the little maiden in the boat sighed too. "So fair you were, Miss Lily, and now you are seared and dead." Mr. Frog told me many months afterward, as we sat on the bank chatting one day over bygone times, that he would never forget the lesson he had learned that day. Neither will I forget that lesson.

It seems to me that ever since that fateful hour water-lilies have a sad air about them. They never frolic with other flowers, but ever keep by themselves, sad and lonely. I reflect now, however, there is reason for it.

Without a further word to assist you, my little friends, you have divined my purpose in telling you this tearful tale. You have guessed rightly when you declare, as did Mr. Frog, that all creatures, even the young and fair, are doomed to blossom

but for a fleeting hour in this world. Then, perhaps without warning, the moment of their "plucking out" will come, and they will wither and die whilst they thought to bud and blossom. Death, then, children, is the fate of all creatures in this life.

The little wild flower that greets you so sweetly by the roadside may, by the morrow, be seared and dead as you come again. The note of melody, that gladdens the air soon melts and passes away. Your life, too, little friends, is to be as these sweet creatures. You may be basking in the sunlight of morning with no thought of you passing, with the stream of innocent pleasure flowing past your feet, when the chill hand of death may steal upon you, perhaps even in a pleasant guise, lift you into the spectership and bear you away into eternity.

Some little folks are wont to call death the closing scene of old age, but this is not so. Many have met this ghastly friend before their little feet had scampered long on the roadside of life.

Two tots chanced one day, to stand before a stately mansion. From the massive iron door, there hung gracefully a scarf of white crepe. "O, how pretty is that scarf of white!" said one. "Yes," quoth the

second, sniffing her nostrils, "it smells of sweet perfume." "What a nice ornament it is for a mansion," they said.

"Ah, it is no adornment," said the old gardener, who sat thoughtfully beneath a tree. "Its perfumed folds of white tell a doleful tale to me. Within those unyielding doors, there lies motionless a child whom I loved. But yesterday, she laughed and sang as I danced her on my knee! To-day she sleeps and the thread of her song she will take up in Heaven." The old servant was prone to continue his story when something must have hurt his throat, for he rested his hand gently upon it and walked away. The two little intruders looked wistfully after him for a few moments, then they strolled toward the wayside, and one of them sighed, "Alas, I thought not of death before."

You recall, little friends, how in the early summer weeks, you scamper through the fields to watch the fireflies dart hither and thither through the slumbering air. As a little chap, I used to do the self-same thing, Now, as I look across the valley, I think to myself, how truly do these tiny beings tell the story of our existence. We spring into life, we glitter before the world for a few years, filled with the idea of our own

greatness. Then the glitter, of a sudden, goes out. We fall from view into our graves. We are thought of no more. A few tears mark the event of our going away and that is all.

Is the thought of death, then, one of itself calculated to fill our little hearts with gloom? No, not at all. The saints sighed for death. Why was the element of fear taken away for them?

Because that which makes death dreadful was absent in their lives; namely, mortal sin. Ah, little friends! When our consciences are free from the sting of sin, we can face death calmly, just as the wearied toiler sits at his cabin door and watches the gleam of day fade slowly from the western sky, and is glad that the evening of rest has come.

St. Paul the Apostle, being a holy man, used to sing to comfort his spirit, "O Death, where is thy victory? Death, where is thy sting?" and his song was beautiful.

Your loving Mother, children, your Faith, gives to death a name so beautiful I cannot help mentioning it. When one of her little ones is dying, she kneels fondly by its side and whispers to the sorrowing friends:

"Weep not! Your dear one is only going home." Isn't that a sweet way of

telling what death is to a devout little Christian? Where is the soul's home? It is in Heaven, wherein there are many mansions for little folks as well as for their elders.

Let your lives, then, children, be always of such purity and goodness that when the time comes for the mysterious hand to reach forth and pluck you from amidst your friends and loved ones, you will go forth, not with tears and trembling, but with hope and peace in your souls. You can then sing: "I am indeed going home to my lasting dwelling with Jesus Christ."

"O, what were life, if life were all? Thine eyes
Are blinded by thy tears, or thou wouldst see
Thy treasures wait thee in the far-off skies'
And Death, thy friend, will give them all to thee."

The Butterfly and the Bee.

AIM IN LIFE.

Mr. Bumblebee was nestled in the midst of a large and fragrant rose. He was busy at work extracting the honey, and stowing it away in his little cask. He had worked away for hours that morning, but withal he seemed to be really happy, for he was buzzing an old tune, like bees usually do.

Miss Butterfly, dressed in her finery of black and gold, came fluttering over the fields as gaily as could be. "Gracious me!" she exclaimed, "how hard that little fellow is working. I wonder why he does not flutter about and fritter away the moments as I do. I will go and ask him." So off she danced and lit gaily on the edge of the rose wherein Mr. Bee was busily working.

"Why, Mr. Bee," she began, as persuavely as she could, "why do you not fly about on the fragrant breeze and sip the sweetness of life as I do. I have no work nor care to cast a cloud over my young life. See above you the blue sky. Hear the brook tempting you away as it dances over

the pearly pebbles. Hear the birds twittering and laughing through the boughs, and you are so serious. O, surely, you will grow old before your time." Now, what answer do you suppose Mr. Bee made to this lengthy and elegant speech? He simply worked away as before, buzzing the same old dronthon. Miss Butterfly looked decidedly puzzled at her failure to make an impression, and was about to make another appeal when Mr. Bee looked over the top of the flower at her with one menacing eye and said:

"See here, Miss Butterfly, you may feel very content to be wafted around on sweet breezes, wear graceful gowns and all that, but no such life for me. I consider you a little fool," and he lifted his little head to its full height. "I am living with a purpose in life. I have some good to do those about me, and I am doing it. You, like many others of your kind, live only to waltz about and look gay. You may pride yourself on being very sensible, but I consider you far from it." What a stern little bee this was!

"What do you mean, Mr. Bee, addressing me in those sharp words," retorted Miss Butterfly. "You may work on, making a slave of yourself if you choose, and die, as you live, working, but the world considers

me possessed of far more sense and prudence than you ever dreamed of." "Is that so?" said Mr. Bee, "we shall see!" So he flew up into the air and scanned the horizon for an instant, then called out with his wheezy voice, "Come here, Miss Humming-bird, I want to speak to you."

Miss Humming-bird, who all the while had been perched on a tiny twig behind a large maple leaf, promptly obeyed the summons and darted over to the place of dispute. "Now, little friends," she said gently, "keep your peace. I heard it all." "Miss Butterfly," she said, turning with courtesy to the dainty creature, "let me tell you that you are wrong, very wrong, to speak as you do. You by no means are as sensible as Mr. Bumblebee.

"You sail about, without thought of any kind in your shallow brain, and if I now were to ask you what purpose you have in life, what aim, you, I am sure, could not answer me.

"Whereas, on the other hand, your friend, Mr. Bumblebee, is known throughout the world for his thrift and industry, and many are the lips he sweetens by his honey.

"When Winter sends his icy blasts across the plains, Mr. Bumblebee has in readiness a cozy shelter, whereas you perish for

your lack of providence." But, now, Miss Humming-bird could see that no further arguing was necessary, for Miss Butterfly was hanging her head for shame. At last she said coyly, "Dear Miss Humming-bird, I cannot gainsay your wise words. My powers of expression are verily inadequate to tell my poignant regret at what I have said." "Phew!" said both her listeners, "What smart language."

They all now joined hands and flew over to Miss Butterfly's dainty little den, where, it is said, they partook of a splendid feast of clover-tops and honey.

I never dreamed, that the tiny head of a bumblebee contained so much wisdom, until I chanced to overhear the foregoing conversation. I am rather pleased to know, that what promised to be so bitter a quarrel was settled so peaceably, for I should rather dislike to see any disruption take place between the bees and the butterflies, they have been loving comrades for many years.

After all, his royal Beeship, is the philosopher of his little world. How grateful Miss Butterfly should have been to have received so valuable an instruction. But it seems to me that she and her kind have profited little by Miss Humming-bird's words. For, I am told, they still flutter

about without any purpose in life. Yes, I must say, that I am proud of my young acquaintance, Mr. Bee. He is not only a source of good example to his young brethren in the insect world, but he preaches from his flimsy pulpit wise sermons to little folks as well, for his life is ever influenced by an aim, a purpose. If you were to hail him some morning as he darts through the air and ask him why he flies hither or thither, he would soon tell you it is because "I am aiming at the fulfilment of some little task. I have an end in view and every time I buzz my wings I move to the accomplishment of that end."

Now I gladly would desist from what I am going to say, little friends, but it must be said, even though the world should stop revolving. How sensible bumblebees are and how giddy many, many little folks are. This assertion may arouse the fire of your indignation against me, but the truth remains. When I come to reflect, it appeals to me that there are two classes amongst all children. There are bumblebees, and then we know there are butterflies.

Who are the bumblebees? They are those children who live with a view to accomplish something in life, to "make their mark" in the world, as business men say.

They are those who even now in their childhood days have clinched in their little noddles, a definite idea of what their future years shall be, and this idea now colors and modifies everything they do. They say to themselves as they work away at school, "I am not going to grow up and lead a mere vague existence. The world is before me and I intend to be a hero in the strife. I am going to pick out such or such a profession or trade, and now as my mind is yielding and plastic, I will mold it into that form which will facilitate my reaching the goal of my desire." So speaketh the wise child. He says, "I see about me in the world men, and boys too, who are tossed about as so many ships on the water, and whose short-lived ambitions lay strewn along the shore of time, like pieces of wreckage. They are ever in a state of turmoil and when their lives come to a close, they are constrained to confess that they had done nothing of note for God, themselves or their country. Why does all this happen? Because their lives were not ordered by an aim or purpose.

One day, a little fellow whom I blush to own as a friend, went out into the woodland to hunt. His father had given him a rifle just suited for a boy. After scram-

bling through the tanglewood for a time, he lifted his rifle, sighted it apparently at something, and began firing away. The minutes sped on, so did the shot, and yet he kept on firing like a young soldier. I happened by just then.

Said I to him, "Little friend, you must be laying low every beast in this lonely fen." "No!" he answered with a silly smile, "I have killed no game as yet." "Why?" I queried in surprise. "O," he rejoined, laying his gun against a tree, "I took no aim. I just fired away for fun." Such an answer angered me, so I left him.

You smile in pity, young friends, I know, at such a want of intelligence, but be not quick to judge. He was not the only foolish boy in the world. What can be said of the youngster, who fires away the precious moments of his school days "just for fun," aiming all the while at absolutely nothing. What can be said of the child who rambles to school, day in and day out, who works fairly well if you please, who drifts along through the years of study with the class, like ships that drift out to sea, but who, when asked, "for what station in life are you preparing yourself?" replies stolidly, "Really, I cannot say. I have none." Is not such a boy just as senseless

as he who used his gun to no avail? I certainly think so.

O, little friends, such a condition of mind is deplorable. Do your cheeks burn with the consciousness of fault when you read these lines? If so, decide this very day upon what purpose the energies of your life henceforth will be focused. Pray for light. Examine and see what your mental qualities may be and then make a resolution that will be as firm as adamant.

You read now and then in your histories, the accounts of the lives of great men, whose names the world has immortalized. You see statues reared to their memories. Then it begins to dawn upon you: This noble countenance was but a few years ago, cast in the milder lines of youth. From those lips that have startled the world with their eloquence, there once rippled the liquid laughter of boyhood, and in those eyes which are now an inspiration to others, the twinkle of childhood pranks sparkled.

What secret power was it, then, that molded the soft boy into the hardy hero? The answer is easy. In days of youth, the resolution to "*be something*" was made, the aim, the purpose was formed and set. Do not blame me, little friends, for talking so sternly to you in this chapter, for it is a

serious subject. Some day, when you have grown up, you will visit that part of your country where the gold-fields are. There, perhaps, you will observe a man advanced in years, working away, swinging his pick with as much vigor as he did many years ago.

Ask that sturdy old warrior why he has weathered so many winters on that lonely mountain-side. He will reply, "I am firmly convinced that beneath these stubborn stones, grains of gold are lurking, and though it may take years for me to unearth that treasure, nothing will shake me from my purpose." And so through sunshine and storm he toils away, until at last, his eager eyes fall upon those precious grains.

The future that is veiled to you now, little friends, holds what is more precious to you than gold; namely, success, spiritual and temporal. Be intent on acquiring it. Direct your efforts thither day by day. O, is it not a sad picture to behold so many men in the world to-day who are tossed through life by the cruel wind of misfortune? If their days of youth were spread before them again, how differently they would use them! How they would live with an aim, a purpose!

Now, I am going to close this little talk

with you by making a request. Ask yourselves this very minute: "What is my aim in life? I am not going to be like the boy who shot without aim. Neither will I resemble the butterfly whom the humming-bird so fitly humiliated, but rather I will be like the busy bee, that precious little being who claims respect the world over.

The Fall of the Mice's Castle.

VENIAL SIN.

I HAVE long been aware, young friends, that almost the entire world holds a feeling of enmity toward little mice. When I say almost the entire world, I refer principally to grown people. Why this is so, I cannot explain. I am sure, though, that you and I, are rather friendly disposed to the little fellows; for, after all, there is no malice in their tiny hearts. They love a frolic just as we do, and that is all. Then, too, they have so many qualities in common with little folks that I am sure we can easily condone their shortcomings.

Well, I am going to tell you of a painful happening that befell a merry little company of mice not long ago, but I trust that you will not feel too downcast over it. It seems that they lived a merry life for the longest time in the vault of an ancient castle, that was ruled by a kind young prince. This prince, as most of them do, dined sumptuously every day.

After the banquet had been finished, the

old butler would gather upon a silver platter the crumbs that were scattered about, and throw them into the vault. Then the feast of the mice would begin. I am told, they had their music and dancing, too. How wonderful! Of this, however, I am not sure. At any rate, like many folks of better intelligence, they were wont to carry their mirth and feasting far into the night. This, 'tis true, was not very commendable, nor was it prudent, for the stealthy Maltese cat of the prince, ever on the alert to suppress any misconduct that might appear, particularly amongst the mice, hearing the tittering and music, one night drove the poor young culprits from the castle walls. So that ever afterwards they were doomed to live in the fields close by.

Now you will admire them when I tell you how stoically they took their banishment. They put their cunning heads together and decided to build a castle for themselves and be free from the tyranny of Miss Pussy Cat. Good for them! Like young beavers did they set to work, and soon the prettiest little home that ever a mouse stepped into, sprang into existence.

To be sure, the feastings of by-gone times were no longer had. They ate of

those things only that are proper food for mice. They became, I have heard, model mice in every respect. Never after, was so much as one theft of cheese imputed to them. This is why I feel some sense of pity when I think of the calamity that befell them.

I would never believe it, did not the prince tell me, that mice are wont to hold birthday parties after the fashion of some of my little friends. Well, on an occasion of this character, there were assembled, I learn, hundreds of little merry-makers. There were mice with gray coats and black, and even other some wore robes of purest white.

They were seated about the rim of a huge platter nibbling away at a piece of cheese, that had found its way, possibly through the lack of the butler's vigilance, into the home of the mice. Melody and merriment filled every hold and corner of the tiny house.

The visiting mouse in the white coat had arisen and was now growing fervid in a speech, the like of which had never before been equaled in mousedom, when, without warning, a crackling sound startled all the diners, and before the spry young creatures could leap aside, the roof came tumbling

down. All was noise and shrieks for a time, as occurs at great calamities. A sadder spectacle, I know, has seldom been witnessed. After a calm had come over the scene, however, it was found that only one precious little life had been snuffed out. It was that of the visiting white mouse.

Tiny tears now stood in the eyes of each young mourner, just as you might suppose. The delicate young form was lifted upon a knoll of moss by willing little hands. There it lay in state, until all the mice of station high and low of the surrounding country, came to pay the last respects. The hour of the funeral at last came. A large brown mouse with unusually ill-proportioned ears, (not meaning to throw ridicule about him,) ascended the pulpit and began to wade through a sorrowful panegyric. His speech was very long and not much to the point, as unfortunately is the case betimes, with sermons of the kind. He was there to exploit his own ability and that, as you know, was bad taste.

However, his closing phrases were so good I thought it well to tell them to you:

"The cause of this disaster, good brothers," said he, "may be laid to one thing: the twig holding the roof in place, I

have noticed for some time, has been affected by what we men of science call "Culpa Mordens." It means just this:—A little white speck of decay began in the heart of the twig. We did nothing to eradicate it. It gradually ate the inner strength away, while it left the surface fair as ever. Hence the ruin of our house when we thought to live in it through many months to come."

Just then a rabbit, attracted thither by the eloquent voice, startled the sad listeners so that they ran frightened in all directions, leaving the still form of the deceased white mouse resting on the knoll of green. Nor did they return. I heard that the good natured rabbit buried the poor mouse himself, but I cannot be sure that this is quite true.

I dislike very much to borrow any ideas from any mouse, however learned he may be. I cannot withhold my admiration, however, of the scientific way in which the noted mouse-orator explained the cause of the calamity. I must say that I can tell of the downfall of many a little spiritual structure in precisely the same way.

In learned scrolls, I find that "Culpa Mordens" is a disease, common alike to trees and children. The mouse did well in

explaining it of trees. Let me do the same for my little friends.

The spiritual life in each of your precious souls is what I fain would call a fragrant little plant. The dew of God's grace and the sunlight of fervor, keep it ever sweet. But just as happens with flowers and plants, the white speck of imperfection may settle on its delicate fabric. Now I know this is rather smart talk, but I will explain. Let us suppose—you fall into venial sin, you persevere in that condition of soul for a very long time. This is the "Culpa Mordens." You feel no contrition for it, you allow it to remain imbedded in your soul. Soon venial sins, without any twitch of conscience, are committed. The entire support of your souls is now being eaten away. The day of sorrow at length comes for you, as it did for the mice. The edifice collapses, when you thought to be the merriest. That is your fall into mortal sin.

The sighs and tears now steal from your little hearts to which before they were entire strangers. Venial sin, my little friends, should not be underrated. It offends God, it decreases the flow of grace into your soul. It makes you sad. These are reasons, therefore, why you should

never consent to commit it. Listen to this:

One morning the sun shone with unwonted splendor. For days it had been imprisoned behind the leaden clouds. It threw its warmth upon the face of a poor sick child who sat by the window looking dreamily into the distance. It seemed glad to be free again. Instantly a smile was awakened on those languid features. That strange sort of sigh, that tells of the passing of sorrow, heaved from her little heart, and she began to hum an old tune. The flowers which her young companions had brought her, heretofore nodding their sleepy heads, woke now from their dulness and greeted the golden light.

Soon, alas, I grieve to say, some heavy clouds overtook the sun and forced it again into its gloomy prison. The flowers pouted and dropped their heads, and so did the girl. The mournful look stole back again into the languid eyes. I felt sorry for the little one, but, do you know, I could not help remarking what a type this occurrence was, of a child who falls into venial sin. It does not shut off entirely the light of God's friendship and grace, to be sure; but, oh! see into what a sad contrast it throws the soul. Now I know why I hear, so often,

gentle sighs coming from little souls. Venial sin is there!

You know, little friends, I am sure, how tenderly your good Lord loves you, and how fondly He would fold you in His arms if He were on earth again. Very well. Even though the cruelty of men keep Him from being the Good Shepherd to you as He was to little folks of yore, nevertheless He is near you ever in the sacrament of His love. Not a day goes by that He does not call to you sweetly to go to Him.

"Come to Me, children," He says. "Bring your tiny vessels to Me, so that I may fill them with the fragrance of grace." These vessels, you know, are your souls. Now isn't it a pity that your Lord is forced to sigh as He peeks into some of these little vessels? "Ah!" I can hear Him say, now and then, "here is a young heart that I would love to fill with my fragrance, but alas! I cannot, since it is already full of unclean water. What is this unclean water? You know. It is venial sin. Now when this happens, I pity our good Lord and feel sorry for that foolish heart.

Here I am going to close my talk on this subject, my little friends, for I do not like long chats. I presume you are the same.

Try to shun venial sin solely because it

is displeasing to your best Friend, Who loves you I know, more tenderly than your mothers do. How unwilling you would be to allow a spark to remain on your dress. It would soon spring into flame and your whole dress be ruined. The burden of venial sin on your conscience, should cause you as much uneasiness as the spark on your dress. Well, now, what are you going to say after pondering these few thoughts? I guess I know. "Good-by, venial sin! I do not want you as a companion any more."

Papinta, the Indian Girl.

VOICE OF CONSCIENCE.

Papinta is the name of a pretty little Indian maiden, who is going to be the pith of my story. You have often seen a fair little lily, blooming ofttimes in a barren place, with the ugliest sort of weeds clustered about it for companions. And you wondered as you beheld the timid nomad, how such a lovely creature came to unfold in the midst of such sad surroundings. So you will marvel when you hear, that amongst the Indian warriors a child so amiable as Papinta could thrive and be happy.

Not many people, even great historians, know the story of my little papoose, so I will give it to you with all its freshness. The pretty pet dwelt with her tribe while summer lingered. But now the chilly winds of Fall were beginning to blow and strip the trees. So the chiefs packed up their tents and led the trail away to a milder climate. Over plains and along rushing streams did they ramble and when night

threw her stillness over them, they would huddle together near the camp-fires in their blankets, and slumber and dream.

The old squaws and braves lolled about the crackling embers one night smoking their calumets and singing war songs. They were indeed in a merry mood. "Come, let us have a song from our little Papinta," cried the old chief. "Where is the young cherub. Do you know, I have not heard her sing to-day."

"Papinta! Papinta!" was now the burden of a thousand cries. A deathlike stillness came upon these shouts. Every face grew rigid in fearful thought. And the light of the smoldering embers threw a ghastly color on the scene. "O, can she be lost?" stole the quivering cry from the mother. And in mournful answer, as a solemn amen, came the half smothered moan from all, "She is lost! Papinta is lost!"

"Come, let us be off and search the glens and thickets," called the chief. In a twinkling the braves were darting through the tangle-woodland, followed by barking hounds. More faintly each moment could be heard the cry: "Papinta, Papinta," but the mournful echo answered, and that was all. With the dawn the braves returned. Papinta was not with them, nor had any

footprints revealed her whereabouts. With heavy hearts did one and all sit about the fire for the morning meal. "I am afraid we will never hear our little song-bird again," sighed the old chief, looking afar off and choking back his tears.

"Hark," cried the mother of the child, becoming rigid and staring into space, "who is singing? How like Papinta it sounds!" All about now moved their heads with a knowing nod. "Alas!" groaned the chief, in scarcely an audible whisper, "it is the voice of her spirit coming to console us." "No, no! it cannot be," said the distracted mother, jumping to her feet like a startled tigress, "it grows stronger and sweeter."

"It does, indeed," answered the old chief, twinkling his eyes in awakening hope. Now the rustle of little feet through the leaves was heard, again another moment, and the bright eyes of Papinta peered through the thicket into those of her gladdened mother. "O, you little runaway!" cried the chief in a maddened love and tossing her into his arms. "Papinta is found!" now rang through the valleys. She was now well-nigh smothered with kisses and caresses. "O, let me tell you of the great spirit I have seen!" cried the

child, gently pushing back her many lovers. "Yes, do! We will listen," cried they all.

"Yesterday, as we trudged along the road," said Papinta, "I stopped to pluck some tulips that nodded to me as though they would speak, as so many little tempters. One blossom after another enticed me farther and farther into the dense woods. My stray seemed but a moment, so pleasant it was, but hours must have stolen away. When I stepped out on the roadside, I looked up and down, but no one could I see. Then I sat down 'neath a willow and wept. Soon sleep came to me. 'Don't cry, little one,' whispered a voice, 'come with me.' I rubbed my eyes to see if I were dreaming, but no! I followed as it led me, but never could I see any one. Now and then, I would turn into a path that I thought would bring me to you, but the voice would call, 'No, no! Not that way!' Soon we came to an old rustic bridge beneath which the waters foamed and rushed angrily. To look at them I paused, they so enchanted me. But once more did the voice bid me not tarry saying, 'There is danger here.' So, like a good little girl, I tripped along.

"I stopped after a time to sip of a sweet brook that smiled at me. But again did I

hear the warning, 'Stay not here to drink. Farther on you will be refreshed.' Then as morning began to gladden the heavens, I heard the muffled roar of some strange beasts. I was about to skip away to see what manner of beings they were, when some strong arm encircled my waist so I could not move.

"The full light of day had come now, and I saw in the valley below me the white points of your tents and the smoke curling lazily through the trees. I said to the strange spirit, 'Can these be the dwellings of my loved ones?' And it answered, 'Yes. Now your wanderings are over. You have heeded my voice, and now you are again with your mother.' The good spirit vanished just then. I felt so happy I began to sing. Now here I am, and glad am I that I followed the promptings of the spirit voice."

Now, had little Papinta never been found, you don't know how I would have pined and worried; for I will tell you in confidence, I knew her and loved her well. But she is not the only child I love. You, little friends, are just as dear to me, though perhaps I will never see you. You are young followers of the Master and how could I be else than fond of you? And

I would grieve if one of you should wander away from the path of holiness.

But I am sensible enough to know that, as you go skipping along life's highway, you may be whispered aside by some false pleasure, some deceitful blossom that may wink at you. To be plain, you may be perplexed at times, as to whether you may enjoy such and such a pleasure, or plan a certain act.

Well, you have a guide to direct you just as true as the one who took Papinta by the hand in her loneliness. That guide is your conscience. You heard its voice for the first time, a few years ago. You recall the day well when you committed some little misdeed. When no human eye witnessed what you did, you thought you were free and no one would scold you. But it was not so. The blush of confusion burned on your cheeks, something tugged at your heart, and a voice that you could not quiet, gave you the sharpest little lecture you ever had. That was the voice of conscience.

It has many times spoken to you since. And it will not cease to be your counselor until your little eyes have closed in their last slumber. Why? Because your Creator loves you, wishes you to come to Him in

heaven. And in your journey thither, you are apt to act as Papinta did, to run after short-lived or sinful things. This voice of conscience will warn you ever. Be prompt, then, in your response to its bidding at all times, and you will be happy always.

In a castle far away, there hangs a costly painting. It shows a "Little Cupid" whispering some secret into the ear of a lady, who all the while smiles pleasantly at what is being revealed to her. Now it seems to me that this is a very true figure of the voice of conscience. How sweetly it speaks to the little heart, who stands wavering on the borders of sin-land. "Do not go, little one," it pleads so gently, "the fruit and flowers of that land have a sweetness of poison, and many tears will mark your tramp back again to the home you so foolishly left." Yes, little friends, your conscience is the voice of your Father in Heaven whispering to you His will. How great a sin it is then for a child to pay no heed to its direction, or to try in any way to smother its sacred whisperings. And yet, I dread to say it, this sacred voice can be quieted or made dumb if the wilful sinner so chooses. You know what morphine is, I am sure. You are aware also how small a grain will render one senseless

in a short time. Sin, oft repeated, little friends, and constant shutting of your ears to the call of grace, are to the soul as so many doses of spiritual morphine. It will grow by the hour more callous and insensible to the gentle chidings of Jesus.

"But, mercy!" I can hear you say, "Father dear, little followers of Jesus as we are never intend to close our hearts to his grace or scamper away beyond the sound of His sweet voice. Why, then, all this mysterious talk about final hardness of heart?"

Well, what you say, little friends, is true. It is my turn to take a little reproach from you. Now, in closing this chapter, I feel that you will allow me to say a parting word of advice to make sure that I haven't hurt your little feelings. It is this: Strive always to keep your conscience sensitive to the voice of grace, just as I know you will try to keep your guileless souls free from the darkness of sin. If you take a mirror into your hands, and breathe on it ever so lightly, that mirror will instantly grow murky and show that its serenity has been disturbed. So let your consciences be, dear little friends. Just as soon as sin, be it ever so slight, throws its gloom over the luster of your souls, take the mystic cloth

of Contrition and burnish them again until they are without stain or spot.

I was going to say a few words about remorse, that agonizing condition of conscience that drags so many to untimely ruin. But I promised to say no more morbid things to you, and I will be true to my word. As the voice of conscience is to be your boon companion for life, to whisper to you sweet things in gloomy hours, and to warn you of dangers, be ever docile and yielding when it speaks. At night, when you lie in your little cots just after the light has gone away, speak then in sweet answer to this voice. It will give you at times a little upbraiding, you must expect that, but take it in a good spirit. It will be for your good. Then, as it leads you to the feet of your Saviour in penitence, say:

"Lord, it is late, I know,
Yet, I have come oppressed;
Led to Thy feet by a voice of care,
I'll weep o'er my folly, but not despair.
I've come, O Lord, for rest.

Atalanta's Wand.

CONFESSION.

I MUST confess to you, before I tell you this story, little friends, that I myself do not credit many of the things related in it, but, as most people never call them in question, you may as well believe them.

Ever so many years ago, when men were twice their present height and dragons crawled the earth, there was hid in a far-off corner of the world by a king named Aetus, a golden fleece. It differed from any other known before or since. This one had the property of curing all sorts of ills and of infusing lasting joy into the soul of him who should behold its blinding brightness, were it for a moment.

Now, just as you may well suppose, thousands of people of all conditions of life, spent most of their time in traveling hither and thither in a faint hope of some day coming across the golden fleece. Some hurried toward the East for years and years, till finally they would bob up again in the very place whence they had set out,

yet it seemed not to dawn upon their confused minds, that the earth was round. The face of the globe, I fancy, appeared to the sun as though it were infested with an army of ants crawling over one another in a disorderly way.

Well, at last, a lad, Jason by name, of noble birth, donned his mantle and girded on his sword, and vowed that he would find the Golden Fleece or die in the attempt. You can see, therefore, how brave he was. So off to his vessel, that was moored near by, did he stride, looking stern as a tin soldier. He found the oars manned by slaves, hardy and strong of limb.

On the prow of the vessel sat Orpheus, the fair songster, twanging his harp and singing sweetly as only he could do. Jason, yet only a lad, stood on the shore and said in ringing tones: "My warriors brave," quoth he, "we go in quest of the Golden Fleece, nor will we cease our toil or travel till we shall find it, be the hardships what they may." "We will go with you," echoed back the chorus from the strong-lunged galley-men.

Jason leaped aboard with agile step and, taking command, said to Xyphus, the helmsman, who, being a star-gazer, knew the points of the compass, "Set your course

for the Groves of Daphny, for but yesterday did I learn from a wizard hag, that the coveted treasure hangs within that grove suspended from a tree!" Xyphus did as he was bidden, so the galley began to bound and leap over the waves just as a blooded steed would do.

Orpheus now took up the thread of his song where Jason had broken in with his address. Now, I have never believed heretofore that strains of music could be heard beneath the waters, but in this instance they were, for fishes of every type, poked their heads out of the foaming sea and ran along after the speeding craft, just as little folks do after the showman. After many hours of singing, the voice of Orpheus died away. The fishes then ceased following the vessel and all slumbered and slept save Jason, whose heart was full of desire. The sea rocked the vessel gently to and fro as a mother would her babe.

All the while, at the prow stood Jason, nor ever moved his eyes from a steady gaze ahead. The little, white-topped waves began to tumble and toss themselves about and whisper to one another something that the young commander could not quite catch. I suppose he thought, as some great ones do, that every one must be talking of him.

The truth, however, is, they were taking no notice of him. Rather were they tumbling with glee on beholding Atalanta, the goddess of the sea, coming in her flimsy tresses toward them. So light of foot was this fair damsel that she stepped from one foamy crest to another without wetting more than the sole of her sandal.

Straightway to the bow of the rocking vessel did she glide. It was only now that Jason beheld her. Falling on one knee and raising his helmet, he sang this welcome to her: "Come, fair daughter of the sea, and be our guide to the Groves of Daphny, for we poor mortals are in search of the Golden Fleece, whose magic power will make us ever happy."

Atalanta, not deigning to board the vessel, but gliding over the foamy crests, said: "Good Jason, in my stay amongst these billows, full many a score of adventurers, young and robust as you, have I seen sailing thither to the grove wherein the Golden Fleece is held, but many have been dashed to atoms by sudden storms and whirlwinds. You sail with dangers lurking ever at your side, for in yonder cave does Aeolus hold the reins of the tempests. At what moment you think not, he may unshackle them, and like so many growling lions,

they would roar over the waves and lash them into fury, and few, indeed, would survive that fury, I assure you. To guide you to Daphny, I am not permitted, lest the anger of Aeolus fall on me. But here I proffer you a wand. Should a sudden tempest come and wreck you, the wand will keep you and your valiant men afloat. Then would I lead you to your homes."

Scarcely had gentle Atalanta finished these words, when King Aeolus, being out of sorts just then, unfettered his fiercest whirlwinds. They howled and shrieked through the masts like hungry wolves about their prey. In a few seconds, the noble ship was a sorry piece of wreckage. Jason and his men were tossed into the torrents, but try as they would, the howling winds could not harm them more. Seeing this, they skulked back into their caves.

A calm now came from the train of Atalanta, and with the swiftness almost of light, she carried the hapless crew to their native shore, they clinging the while to the golden wand. When at last, a huge white crest dropped them gently upon the sandy beach, they wept for joy and gratitude to Atalanta, and to this day, her name is held in benediction, so I am told.

Little friends, I do not know whether I

feel sorry or glad when I read this story. Sure, I feel sorry at the failure of Jason to get the Golden Fleece, then again, I feel so glad when I hear of his rescue from the storm's fury. To be wrecked is indeed a sad fate, so is it a fate none the less pitiable for a young soul to be wrecked by the gales of mortal sin.

You, little folks, are now sailing over the sea of life in search of a golden fleece also; that is, Heaven. Now and then, however, storms that steal out of the caves of Satan may overtake you. But, just like gentle Atalanta, your holy Faith holds out to you a wand of rescue. What is that wand? It is holy confession. The more I think of this tender mercy to souls, the more I am drawn sweetly to love Our Saviour who instituted it.

He knew that His little followers now and then would grow forgetful and drift away from Him into Satan's hurricanes. All the while, he has provided for this sad emergency. He has instructed your Spiritual Atalanta, Holy Mother Church, to lead you back to the shore whence you strayed away. Then, further up in the cool glen, he has fashioned a bower of reconciliation, whither little hearts could come and receive the kiss of pardon.

I feel, children, that you know all that the catechism teaches about holy confession. In this little talk, I am centering my efforts on encouraging you to run eagerly to this sweet sacrament whenever your little souls grow remorseful, or your eyes feel inclined to tears of regret.

There is no real misfortune in this world, remember, save that which mortal sin brings, and there is no sadness like that which follows in its wake. So there is no joy sweeter to the soul than the one she drinks in while kneeling in humble sorrow at the feet of the Master.

One day, as I strolled through the woodland, I heard a voice crying. As I turned, I beheld a little girl hurrying toward me through the tangled brambles. She pressed one of her tiny hands to her heart with the other. When she came up to me modestly at last, her tears broke all bounds and sobbing aloud, she said:

"O, good sir, see my poor finger. A black thorn has pierced it through, and oh! how it pains me!" I took the little injured member, and as softly as I could, I drew out the burning little thorn. Then, just as her mother would have done, I pressed the wounded finger to my lips and I was pleased to see the innocent face beam-

ing in smiles again. As the little one skipped away relieved of pain, I thought to myself: "O, would that the consciences of all young children would be pained by the sting of sin as this one's finger was by the piercing of the thorn! And would that their little feet would run to their confessor with as much longing as she ran to me."

Yet I hear there are some boys and girls who, through having the thorns of sin in their souls, fear to go to their spiritual father to have them drawn out. Ah! this should not be so; for, after your mother, your dearest confidant should be your confessor. Make him the sharer of your sorrows and the partaker of your joys, the keeper of your little secrets. There should be no place whither you fain would run with greater eagerness than to the holy confessional, for it is herein that you are to draw near to your loving Master, whom you may have wounded by grievous sin. He will fold you in His loving embrace as He did of yore the children whom sin had made despair, and with the music of the words "Go in peace" ringing in your ears, you will skip out into the world again, with a secret joy in your hearts, and a merrier ring to your laughter.

Read the life of your Lord, little friends,

from beginning to end, and in those blessed pages you will not find narrated one single harsh word addressed to a sinner who came sorrowing at His feet. So when you are left alone with Him in the confessional, you need have no doubt that He will speak to you gently, and with mercy.

In years to come when you shall have reached the age that borders on the grave, when with tottering step you shall trudge slowly into the confessional, you will realize then even better than now, that when all those pleasures of a vain world have failed to give joy to your heart, you will cling to the confessional as the true comforter in your loneliness.

Tad's Trip to Mars.

CHARACTER IN THE FACE.

I ONCE knew a little lad very intimately, but he is dead now, upon whom his playmates fastened the euphonic name of Tad. Tad differed from every other boy I have ever known in this particular, that he dozed much during the day, and would lay awake for hours through the night gazing at the good old planet, Mars. It puzzled his closest chums to know that it held so strange a fascination for him; but the same wonderment was not stirred within me, for I knew that this remarkable lad was gifted with a funny faculty that has not been the fortune of any boy, before or since his time. It was this:—he spent the lone hours of midnight in chatting with Mars. You may grin at such a statement, but it is really so. As I said before, Tad is dead now, and thus you must rely solely on my word for the truth of this tale. You will grant me this courtesy I am sure.

Well, the little fellow stole from his bed

one night, because it was warm, and the mosquitoes insisted on buzzing their tunes. "I must have air," he said peevishly. As you may surmise, the air in his room was hot. So clad solely in his night robe he crept noiselessly out on the balcony, and began to indulge himself with his wonted practise of star-gazing and chatting with Mars.

"O, how calm and serene you are!" he sighed in ecstasy. "How I yearn to go and talk to you more closely, but alas! I cannot reach you," and so he sat with his chubby face wedged between his hands, and chinned with Mars. What passed between them will never be known.

"Come, my plump little chap, and I will take you to the moon," broke in a harsh old voice that sounded as the squeak of a rusty wheel. Tad was startled. He glanced about him, but could see no one. "My very thoughts are divined by some one," he murmured. Just then a rustling noise fell upon his ears; he lifted his eyes and there he beheld a grizzly witch astride a broom. At first glance Tad was alarmed, but then there was something calming about her haggard face, and so his fear went away.

"Would you like to ride to Mars?" asked

the witch, now laying her bony hand on Tad's soft hair. "Sure I would," said he, answering like a little man. "I fear, though, my mother would miss me," but then he winked. "O, never," said the witch with assurance. With this she lifted the amazed little chap upon the broom before her. Buzz! went the broom. Like the flight of an arrow gracefully and swiftly, did they soar towards the sky. Tad shouted and clapped his hands for glee. The witch had a smile too. Higher and higher they flew, passing now and then a huge white cloud that seemed rolled up and sleeping for the night. The stars by degrees increased their size a thousand times, and they bathed Tad and the witch in their weird blue light; but still higher than this did they soar. All about them at length became bright as the dawning of day, and here the little runaway's eyes opened wider than ever. Yes, they were coming upon the planet, for now even its sulphur colored mountains were visible.

"O, who are those funny imps coming towards us?" gasped Tad, gripping the witch's sleeves; but time was not given her to answer, for they were instantly borne into the middle of a swarm of air-ships that buzzed through the clouds like big

June bugs. Seated in each was a dwarf, so funny of face as to make Tad laugh behind his cap.

They made menacing gestures at the intruders, and Tad knew on the moment that the witch and himself were, forsooth, prisoners.

Scarcely a moment sped by, and they were standing in the presence of the exalted Bey or ruler of Mars, who, unlike his people, was great of stature and handsome. After a time he blew a trumpet, and in stalked a very shaky old man holding to a parchment. He halted before the two prisoners. The Bey, pointing angrily, said, "Unfold to me, sir, the secrets of these people." The old man, beginning to quiver, spoke as follows:

"Worthy sir, at your bidding I will read to you what manner of beings these are, by peering into their countenances." He drew near, and wrinkled up his face in a hideous way, as to his bleary eye he fixed a glass. "This one," said he, pointing to the witch, "is a crafty wicked person, devoid of all heart. She will work evil here in Mars, if she be let remain. This one," continued the old fogey, turning on his heel as though on a pivot, and looking with a squint at Tad, "is a good, pious

little chap, yet untouched by anything of evil."

"Whence come you, my little tot?" asked the seer. "From the earth," responded Tad in a clear voice. "Ah, we must spare you, for your face tells you have a good heart, and an unsullied soul."

"'Tis well," shouted the Bey, waving away the seer with his golden scepter. And they bound the old witch in chains, and put her in a dungeon filled with vermin and creeping things. Then came the Queen, modest of manner, and taking Tad by the hand brought him to her children. "You are a kind, good Queen," said Tad, kissing her silken slipper, "and, I love you. But I would like to go back to earth again, for I surely will be missed." "It shall be as you will," quoth the Queen. She sang out a few dulcet notes and a craft of dainty model poised in the air before them. Tad hopped into it saying good-bye as he did. The little adventurer nearly lost his breath, so rapid was his flight. An hour of bewilderment passed, and the old moon peeked out just in time to see a frightened boy stealing through a window in the castle.

In the morning Tad did not tell any one of his adventure. Nor did he ever tell.

He grew to be a man and he was good and pious, just as the seer said he would be. But as I have said before, he is dead now, and I feel that I am casting no murky cloud over his memory in telling you of the most notable experience of his life.

Now, little friends, I suppose you have come to the conclusion that the hoary old seer of Mars has about the brightest mind that glistens in the intellectual firmament, because he unfolded a few secrets about Tad, by a mere glance of the eye. Well, with all due respect to the old man, I claim that most of you here on this humble sphere, can do the same thing. Yes, it is quite true that we bear upon our countenances the indexes of our characters. If it is true that the eye is the window of the soul, it is likewise true that the face is the reflector of the mind and heart. If this again be true then we must admit that we carry the key to our characters upon our faces. Yes, that is what the seer and I think. Of course Tad is dead or he would, I am sure, give us the weight of his sanction too.

Little friends, God has created us all for His own wise purpose. We are so many little mites in a mosaic, and with His master-hand, He so places us as to contribute most to the beauty of His ideals.

He did not give to every child a pretty face, but He has endowed all with a will and an intellect, enlightened by grace; and if we use these faculties, in compliance with His holy Law, our hearts will be sinless, then the light of peace will sweeten our every look and smile. Let me impress this idea:

Before us there stands a child who, with foot upon the threshold of life, looks out upon the great world as upon a wonderland. He hears the song of the birds. He catches the fragrance of the blossom. He is as unsullied as the lily that blows modestly before him. As you look at that chaste little countenance, you are led to suspect that a cherub has stolen away for a moment from its choir in heaven. Now let twenty years roll by ere you see that face again; and let us suppose that in the meanwhile that youthful heart turned from grace, having been led aside by the demon of lust and intemperance. With a shudder your eyes fall upon the scene before you. Can this youth of such coarse aspect be the development of that winning child of twenty years ago? Yes, it is so. Sin with its touch of poison has molded those features into their present type. The sparkle of chastity that lit up the eye of

childhood, has long since been smothered. Ah yes, little, friends, the loveliness of face has been destroyed by the scars which vile thoughts and deeds have made, and this painful recasting of feature is going on as the years roll by.

Perhaps you have seen, my little friends, those red rubber faces which boys buy at the toy store. Now if I were to take one of those faces and press it in the same way repeated times, it would soon take on a fixed distorted appearance. Just so with human countenances. A daily habit of virtue or vice will soon make the features accordingly pleasing or ugly.

Some years ago in the city of Florence an artist went about in search of a model whom he would have pose for a picture of our Saviour. While walking along the noisy street one evening he saw a young man seated upon the steps of a church. The sweetness of his expression caught the eye of the artist. "Ah!" he exclaimed as artists only can, "what a picture that would make." And so he approached the stranger gently. A few months later there appeared in exhibit, a picture of the Saviour that won the whole city. Three years now sped on when the Cardinal besought the artist to paint a portrait of Judas. He consented and

through many days he walked in quest of one whose expression would be as that of Judas. As night was coming on, the wearied artist stopped at a wayside inn, where rude characters were wont to be. He almost gasped as he caught the glare of a wicked gaze that riveted steadily upon him. "Here is my model," murmured he. As he viewed the face before him he sighed, "What a pity, so young, but what a Judas!"

And so with cautious words he drew near and made known his wish. But the unfortunate youth turned sullenly away and grew silent. Still the artist pressed his purpose offering the stranger much money to pose. But the latter's head drooped upon his breast as he cried," Oh, good sir! you recall memories that pierce my very heart with remorse. But three years ago I stood as your model of Christ, and now can it be that I have fallen to resemble His betrayer? No, never." And so he turned and mingled with the crowd and the artist saw him no more.

Now, little friends, I have said something I trust to convince you that your actions and mode of life will tend to modify your features and that to a degree of certainty your characters can be read therefrom.

There is an old adage, "Handsome is

that handsome does." By a virtuous life and a light heart you can so model your countenances that all will be pleased to look upon them. If you would have faces such that others would admire, then emulate the good and the noble in this life and you must bear a semblance to them, in time, even as to features. Associate, too, with good companions. You cannot but be influenced by contact with them just as you cannot walk through a garden of roses without taking away some of their sweet odor.

Princess Florence's Dream.

WHAT CLOCKS TEACH.

I DON'T mind telling you something in confidence, children, because you are my little friends. I have told you many of my inmost secrets already, because I know I can trust you. But be careful in safeguarding what I tell you now, lest divulging it, the anger of some Princess fall on me. It is this. I don't like Princesses. Nor I never will, because as a rule they are haughty and proud. I know many Princesses all over the world. Of all this number, however, there is only one I have any regard for. Her name is Florence. She is good and true.

She sat one night on the side of her cozy little bed. She was very tired. Even the tiny rose in her hair seemed tired too, for its head was droping. During the whole evening she had danced and sung at the festival that her young friends had held in her honor. One by one the little serenaders had departed with the merry call "good-night." Now the old castle had be-

gun to take on its wonted somber stillness. She sat for a moment with her eyes fixed upon the face of the old clock, as though it really charmed her, though her thoughts were with her jolly little friends, the ring of whose laughter she could hear in the distance. Then as though some fairy wand had passed over her eyes they slowly closed: she yawned a few times and then dropped her curly head upon the soft pillow. A few moments passed and she was fast asleep. Her good old nurse drawing aside the heavy curtains peeped into the room, but when she saw her little charge sleeping she lowered the light and passed out as noiselessly as a vision.

Soon the queerest sight that the eyes of a child ever beheld came before the Princess. In marched pet pussy. On her head sat a cute little lace cap. She walked upright too. Under her paw there was tucked a school book, and on her nose there was saddled a pair of spectacles. She picked up a tiny rod and began to rap loudly on the book. Instantly, from every corner, there came tumbling into the room a dozen or more sprightly little mice. They gathered around Miss Pussy and stood all attention as children do at class. But what made the Princess wonder more than

all else was to learn that pussy and her class could talk.

"Do you know what the tall column is here," said the teacher, pointing to the old clock that stood close by, swinging its pendulum in steady time.

"Yes, I know," said the little chap at the head of the line. "Our mistress calls it a clock."

"That is indeed its name," said Miss Pussy; "but what is its use?"

"I can tell you," answered a thin squeaky voice. "It lets you know the hour of the day."

"You are correct," said the teacher. "But does it teach us anything else?"

To this question there came a long pause. The old clock stopped swinging his long thin arm, as though to better listen to what the mice might say of him.

"Well! well! what a bright class you are," said Miss Pussy laughing in scorn.

"Now listen, I will tell you. Many things indeed it teaches.

But just then there came a loud rapping at the door. "O, flee for your lives," she cried to her bewildered pupils; "there is danger near at hand." Through the door and under it they all darted as fast as they could. Miss Pussy threw away her book

and glasses and crouched in fear near the divan on which the Princess was sleeping. The rapping noise grew all the while louder and at last an old withered hand reached through the curtains and touched the Princess on the forehead. A voice called, "Arise, my dear, His Lordship awaits your coming in the outer chamber."

The little dozer now seemed very much confused.

"O, nurse, why did you break up the class?" said the Princess, rubbing her eyes. "Why, dear, what class? asked the nurse, giving the little one a quizzical look. The Princess made no reply for a time, but fell on her knees quickly and looked under the couch, groping in all directions. "What ails you, my dear?" said the nurse, "you act so very strangely?"

"O, where is pussy?" besought the Princess.

"Why, there she is," said the nurse pointing to pussy, who lay asleep on the mat.

"O, I see it all now," said the Princess smiling; "you awoke me as I was dreaming."

Now I think that the questions the pussy asked the mice were very sensible ones, and, as they were interrupted, I will answer in their stead. Does the clock teach us

anything? Yes, indeed, but we become so accustomed to his old face and tick that he at times fails to bear any meaning for us.

First of all, he teaches us how very precious each moment of our lives is. As though the moments were so many grains of gold, he deals them out, so to speak, in clicks or measures. The smallest measures are the seconds, then come the minutes, and lastly the hours. Now, the next time you notice a clock, you will observe that one hand is longer than the other. Why is that? He points out minutes with his long hand to tell us in so many words, "My young friend, look you well to the minutes, use them well, and the hours will take care of themselves." This is, of course, very true. If you employ each moment of the day, as it flies by, in a holy way, the hours are bound to be well spent, and so are the days and the years. Remember that with each tick of the clock our lives are slipping away.

Here is something about time that should make you reflect very much. Once spoiled it can never be repaired. Should you break one of your little toys, you can patch it up and make it again as good as new. Not so with time: It does not wait to be redeemed, but flies off into eternity, bearing with it the record of your folly. Now should you

have been guilty of waste of time, do not feel gloomy about it. What does a little boy do who is engaged in a race when he begins to fall in the rear? Why, he just puts on an extra burst of speed, and he is soon moving along with the leaders. So should you do with time. Catch up now. If you have been losing time in the past, employ it well henceforth.

One day little Mabel brought a clock to the repair shop. "Sir," she said, "I think it has heart trouble."

"Very well," said the old man, without saying a word to correct her false notions. "All your time-piece needs, is regulating," and glancing at the great clock that hung on the wall he set the hands of the disordered one accordingly. Well, your hearts are often affected as was Mabel's clock. They need regulating: they do not keep time with God's great clock. Their tiny beats or ticks now and then fail to keep pace with the great clock of His Divine will. Then they must be brought to the spiritual clock-maker, the good priest, and he will regulate them so as to make them work in unison with God's great clock.

Did you ever see a cuckoo clock? I suppose you did. Well, when the end of the hour comes, how cute it is to see the little

bird march out on his front porch, point his head heavenward and send out a shrill note for each hour. Now, I wonder how many there are who do as the cuckoo does. I wonder how many raise their hearts and heads to God as each hour goes by, and whisper a prayer of thanksgiving for the gifts of precious time! How many of you bless the hour? If you have not heretofore been in the habit of doing this, begin now to conform with this precious custom. As you pass along the street and you hear the chimes of the tower ringing out the hour, bring your mind to reflect: I must remember I am in the holy presence of God. I adore His Divine Majesty. That tolling tells me another span of life is passed, another bead in the rosary of life has slipped through my fingers.

Once there was a king who desired to keep in mind at all times the fact that he must die. So he elected one of his courtiers to come before him at the close of each hour and repeat these words, "Remember, O King, thou, too, are mortal." We have no courtiers to perform this office for us, but I think the little tongue of the clock answers the purpose very well.

But would you believe that clocks can acquire reputations just as boys and girls

can? Yes they can. Some of them are considered very reliable, and so men believe whatever they indicate, but should one deceive or prove false, which means keep bad time, then its owner will never put faith in it again, even though it will try ever so hard to regain its reputation for correctness. It will soon be discarded, and another will take its place. Now, the same idea may be applied to children. Every one believes that they are good and innocent. But suppose that a child should some day deceive, say his father. Its little face may not show that anything is wrong, but when the father once detects that he has been deceived, he will never again place confidence in what that deceitful child may say.

Now, you must agree that the poor old clock on which you spend only a casual glance is after all a wise old teacher. It tells us, that time is even more precious than gold. It will be happy for us one day if we use it well now. King David once prayed, "O Lord, so teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to wisdom. The child who does nothing with his time is, in the eyes of all, worth nothing. Suppose your old clock at home were to ask you some day, "What

use are you making of the golden hours as I am measuring them out?" Would you not be confused at the question? Would you not be forced to hang your head and say, "O, Mr. Clock, I blush to answer what you ask. I have frittered them away. Like a piece of old scrap paper I have thrown them aside." Remember that as the clock looks at you during the day so does the all-seeing eye of God. Work for Him alone, and not because you are watched by your parents or instructors. St. Paul says, "Be not eye servants," that is, do not work only when you are watched and idle when you are alone.

But think especially well of what I am going to tell you now. Remember that above every clock there is an angel standing, who, day and night, is recording the way in which you use the moments as they tick by. And when the clock has clicked its last; when its spring has been worn out, that is when life is over, the record, the angel has been keeping all through the years, will then be opened before you and Christ alone. I trust that as you face your Judge, you will not be forced to employ the words of Peter, who being told by our Lord to launch his boat, exclaimed, "Master, we have labored all night and have taken

nothing." So shall the idler of time sigh on the day of reckoning, "Lord, I have used up the precious moments You gave me and in them I have taken nothing for heaven."

But I must not forget to give a mention to our faithful little friend, the alarm clock. His work is important too, and he does it very faithfully. When you are slumbering soundly, he sprinkles his silvery notes into your ears just at the moment you requested him, and he says, "Get up, little one; God has given you another day of life. Get up, dawn is here."

His piercing voice is so like the voice of grace. Not you so much as the older ones may at times fall into the slumber of sin, and may become insensible to all promptings of grace. O, this is a slumber indeed that is pitiable, for one may never awake from it. The notes of the alarm, that voice of conscience, now and then rings out clear and strong, "Awake, my child; you have slept long enough in darkness and in sin. Come, get up and go out into the sweet morning air and the sunlight of God's grace."

Now just a few more words to you and and we shall bid good-bye to Mr. Clock. I hope in future, when any one asks you

what the clock teaches you, you will not be like these little mice at whom the pussy laughed because of their dulness. If you have been little idlers in the past begin to-day to think more seriously of the great value of time. Do, as St. Paul advises, "Redeem the time." What does 'redeem' mean? It means to buy back.

May the Good Lord grant that when the hands of your clock stop, never to go again, you will be able to say with St. Paul, "I have redeemed the time and now in return I will enjoy a blissful eternity."

The Snail's Victory.

DON'T BE DISCOURAGED AT FAILURES.

"COME, come, Mr. Snail, you must move more nimbly than that if you wish to see the great boat-race this morning! See, here I go! O, pshaw! I can't wait for you, I'll run on ahead!" It was Mr. Grasshopper who piped out these words as he came bounding by Mr. Snail one fine morning, as the latter was trudging along in the direction of the old mill-pond.

"See here, Mr. Grasshopper," said Mr. Snail, growing a little angry at so much chiding, "the good Lord has endowed you with a set of long, limber legs; no wonder you move so sprightly. To me, He has given only short, little creepers, besides I have the burden of a shell on my back."

Impolite, as Mr. Grasshopper was, he did not tarry to hearken to Mr. Snail's excuses, but skipped ahead, his green coat-tails flying in the breeze. At this slight, poor Mr. Snail paused for a moment and sighed. His feelings were hurt, but he soon started off with a determined nod of his head.

"O friends," said Mr. Grasshopper, jumping into the meeting hall, "you will laugh when I tell you who is coming down the lane,—Mr. Snail, just think of it!" "What on earth can he want here, I wonder?" said Mr. Spider, climbing over the heads of all. "He is going to enter the race, I suppose," chimed in Mr. Beetle. At this remark, all present laughed heartily. The idea of such a thing!

Their noisy merriment had just died away when Mr. Snail, seeming somewhat tired, crawled through the grassy door. "My worthy Princess," said he, bowing to Miss Wren, "I have heard of your generous offering of prizes to the one of your subjects who shall prove himself the best oarsman on yonder mill-pond, so I have come a distance." "To witness the race, of course," broke in Miss Wren. "No, no, but to take part in it," said Mr. Snail.

"O, what a foolish fellow that is!" all present murmured. Miss Wren hid her face behind her wing for laughter. "Very well, be it so," said the Princess, resuming her haughty air. "You may row if you choose, but really I fear you will have no chance. Do you not see about you here athletes fleet of foot and strong of limb, who are going to glide over the water this

morning?" "O, do not discourage him," buzzed Mr. Bumblebee. It will be fun for us all to see him splashing away in his clumsy shell." Mr. Snail looked at the floor in silence.

The cricket band now began their music, a grand march it was. All the contestants filed out one by one to the strains of the harmony. Soon, each was seated in his odd little shell of bark, ready to pull the first stroke. "Are you ready? Go!" cried the Princess, fluttering her wing as though it were a flag of signal. Instantly there was a great splash of water. The tiny oars dipped and rose again, their blades glittering in the sun. They had not moved two feet, when Mr. Beetle, pulling too vigorously, broke his oar. His little craft swung around like a top, and soon sank. Mr. Gadfly used his wings as well as his oars and so he was disqualified. Then a mishap befell Mr. Spider. A fat little fly came sailing close to his head; he leaped to catch it and fell overboard. This accident happened just as the little paddlers were turning for the homeward course. All the while Princess Wren sat on the bank enjoying the sight very much. Only three now remained in the race: Mr. Grasshopper, Mr. Wasp, and Mr. Snail. "See

poor Mr. Snail trailing in the rear," said the Princess. "He has no chance to win, but he keeps paddling away."

The finish line was not now far away; a few more strokes and the race would be over. At this juncture Mr. Wasp made some caustic remark about the grasshopper's long green coat which angered the latter very much. One cross word provoked another until finally they became engaged in a vicious quarrel. By this time Mr. Snail had caught up to them. He smiled as he moved noiselessly by. He pulled a few more steady strokes and then he glided over the line the winner of the race.

"Well," said he as he crawled along with the prize tucked away in his pocket, "slow as I may be, I am glad that I did not become discouraged in the race."

What a strange little tale is this, little friends; yet I tell it to convey some lesson not only to you but to others who may read it. This is the lesson:

Many little ones are snails as regards the activity of their minds. I do not say that it is their fault, but Almighty God has endowed them with intellects that do not work as rapidly as their companions.

Very often they are prone to become dispirited when they see how slowly they

progress, and how quickly their fellow companions, who work less diligently, get along.

For little ones so fixed in life I have fashioned this story. Do not let the thought take hold of you, that only those possessed of quick working and retentive minds—"smart ones," as you call them, will always win the prizes in life—not at all. Ofttimes the snails, those having less brilliant mental qualities come off the victors in life's struggle. If slow of mind, if you cannot learn a lesson as quickly as many others, be not discouraged at your failure or tardiness. Keep paddling away. You will win in the end as surely as the snail did.

But then you may say, "O, it is so hard to be compelled to suffer the sneers and taunts of my companions when I fail." Was not the poor snail laughed at when he said he would enter the race, and yet heedless of the jeers that were levied at him, he won. Obstacles must stand in the way of every child in one form or other. But, reflect, little ones, for whom you are working. Is it for the world, for applause, for time? No, but for eternity, for your salvation. Your good Lord in heaven will not let pass by without reward the least of

your efforts. He bore much for you in the way of insult and mockery. Take up your little cross then and toddle after Him.

One day a little boy at school named Eddie, was given a problem to do. Upon the correct solution of this problem depended his chance of receiving the best prize. For hours and hours did he work and yet the proper answer did not result. "I will give it up," he said at last throwing down his pencil. He began to look out the window at the sheep on the hillside and wish he was one of them. After a few moments a look of interest stole over his face. Near by in the corner there hung an old cobweb. Among its silken meshes a poor little fly had entangled itself. The little fellow's heart went out in pity to the poor fly. He said to himself, "When the cruel old spider pops out of his hiding-place, good-bye to Mr. Fly. Ah! I will go over and free its wings. But just then the little captive by a mighty effort broke the bonds and flew across the room, and he really seemed to laugh at the boy as he darted through the air. "Well," said Eddie, biting his lips, "no fly is going to surpass me in being resolute." His pencil now began to click on the slate as though he were a telegraph-operator. In a few

moments his little feet were pattering the floor with excessive joy. "I have it," he whispered, "I have it now. The prize will be mine!"

Don't you know, children, that a child who will give up a task, because things at times become discouraging, really forfeits all right to the respect of his companions. Why, one of the proudest titles a boy can confer on his ideal chum is that he is a "plucky lad," he has plenty of grit, etc., All these are really encomiums that every boy should strive to merit.

Many years ago in Greece there lived a flaxen-haired youth. Theseus was his name, and he was of royal birth. While surrounded with luxury of every kind, there was a secret sorrow in his heart, for he with his mother, Aethra, was an exile, he knew not why, from his father's palace. One evening he came to his mother and said, while resting his head on her shoulder, "Why can I not go home, I have been exiled so long?"

"I cannot tell you, child," said she tenderly stroking his cheek and peering into his eyes as though she beheld a vision there. You are but a tiny boy as yet. See if you can lift that rock beside you. Now the rock was deeply imbedded in the ground

and its top was clad in moss. The little fellow had a great opinion of his strength, so grasping the rock firmly he tugged and toiled, but it moved not. Soon he became quite out of breath. His mother stood looking on with a sad smile, to see the zealous, yet puny efforts of the boy. "You see how it is, Theseus, said she. "You must possess far more strength than you do now before you can go to Athens. When you are able to lift that rock I promise you can set off.

Often and often after this Theseus asked his mother whether it was time to go to Athens, and still she pointed to the rock and told him that it would be years before he would be able to lift it. And again the curly-headed boy would tug at the huge mass, striving, child as he was, to do what a giant could scarcely have done. Meanwhile the rock seemed to sink further and further into the gound. The moss grew over it thicker and thicker, until it looked like a soft green seat. The trees above stretched their long arms over it, and shed their brown leaves upon it as the Autumn came. At its base grew ferns and wild flowers. To all appearance the rock was so firmly fastened that no power on earth could budge it.

Theseus was now grown up to be a vigorous youth, and every time he came near the rock he would mutter with clinched fists, "I'll move it some day; I will never give up."

"Mother, I do believe it has started," he would murmur after some of his attempts.

"No, no, child," his mother quickly would answer. "It is not possible that you could have moved it, such a boy as you are still." Then he would sigh and sit aside in the shade and say, "I will try again to-morrow, I must keep on."

Years of fruitless effort rolled by when they were again seated near the moss-covered stone. Aethra was telling him the oft-repeated story of his father, how gladly he would receive Theseus at the palace, and present him to his courtiers and people as their prince. The eyes of Theseus glowed with desire, he could hardly sit still to hear his mother speak.

"Dear mother," he exclaimed, jumping to his feet "I am no longer a child; I feel myself a man. To-day shall I move that stone." Then he bent himself to his task. He heaved, he lifted, and he resolved to succeed or perish there and let the rock be his monument forever. As Aethra stood with clasped hands gazing at him, the

great rock stirred! Yes, he raised it slowly from its mossy bed, uprooting the shrubs near it and turned it over on its side. Theseus had conquered.

"Behold, Theseus," said his mother. "See what glitters in the cavity." "It is gold," said he springing to grasp it.

"Ah, it is more than gold, my boy," she said. "Here are your father's sword and sandals."

"I will set out for Athens this very day," cried Theseus kissing his mother. And so he became a powerful prince, and his people loved him.

Now, children, it is not necsssary that I should point out to you the moral of this story. You have already grasped its teaching. To accomplish anything in this life, either in the spiritual or the natural world, you must tug day in and day out too in the face of discouraging events. You become disheartened with your little tasks at school, let us say. Rest in the shade awhile, keep up a stout heart, and go at it again. It may take months, it may need years to come out ahead. But remember that under every single stone of disappointment there lies buried a golden treasure. When you have grasped that treasure finally you will thank God you did not give up.

You will unearth a sword which you can wield to beat down everything that would entangle your feet as you march on to success.

Remember, too, that many of those who now claim a large share of the world's praise for their noble and brilliant deeds were as youths not all noted for being bright. As the boys now style it, they were tail-enders. What led them finally to do signal success? Why plodding away with stout heart, just as did Mr. Snail, and Theseus.

Now, children, I have purposely strung together these little stories, seemingly disregarding order, having in view one idea, namely, to impress you with the importance of persevering. So before I close I will tell you another short story to further my purpose.

Away down south a young darkey once sat by the wayside. Down his ebony cheeks, like silver drops, tears were coursing, and by his feet a stream danced along into the woodland.

"Oh! you lil' brook," he sighed. Wish I was happy and free as you, but I isn't." Just then he heard footsteps rustling through the leaves. He turned and saw the face of the old parson beaming on him.

"Wha' you weepin' for, chile?" said the old man, laying his hand gently upon the little wooly head. And the full round eyes looked up into the parson's face; the secret of sorrow was soon confided.

"Well, I hab no time to stay and gladden yo' young heart, chile," he whispered, "but here, read dis lil' poem," then he passed from view along the road.

These were the lines:

I.

If the day looks kinder gloomy,
An' your chances kinder slim;
If the situation's puzzlin'
An' the prospects awful grim,
An' perplexities keep pressin'
Till all hope is nearly gone,
Jus' bristle up and grit your teeth,
An' keep on keepin' on.

II.

Fumin' never wins a fight
An' frettin' never pays;
There ain't no good in broodin' in
These pessimistic ways—
Smile jus' kinder cheerfully
When hope is nearly gone,
An' bristle up, and grit your teeth
An' keep on keepin' on.

III.

There ain't no use in growlin'
An' grumblin' all the time,
When music's ringin' everywhere,
An' everything's a rhyme—

Jus' keep on smilin' cheerfully,
If hope is nearly gone,
An' bristle up, and grit your teeth,
An' keep on keepin' on.

So, children, in whatever affair you may be engaged, when the clouds begin to lower, look through the gloom to the bright days ahead, an "keep on keepin' on."

Vincent's Dream.

PARADISE.

"Oh! sister, you do not know how very lonesome I am to-night, I feel as though I were alone in the world. If mother had not died, I could bear up bravely. But now that she is gone from me to Heaven, I wish that I too were there." These were the words that little Vincent Plorans sighed to Sister Teresa, as she stood by his bedside to bid him "good-night." Though dimly the light burned, she could see the tears like little drops of silver running down his pretty face. Yes, poor Vincent's mother had been buried that very morning, and he was spending his first night in the Orphans' Home.

Sister Teresa spoke very kindly indeed to Vincent, in trying to soothe his bruised heart, but the soft low music of her voice, only seemed to have the contrary effect of coaxing out the sobbing.

The gentle sister, seeing after a time the effect of her words, sat down, by his little cot, and I saw the pearly beads passing

through her fingers like little tots coming out of church, one by one. Every few moments she would turn her eyes upon the curly head buried in the pillow.

Silence is sometimes the best consoler for aching hearts, and aching heads too. So it proved to be in this instance. Little by little the sobbing quieted down. Now a sigh heaved from the little orphan's bosom. Slowly his eyes closed. Gentle slumber now wrapped him in her arms so the faithful sister withdrew, making no more noise than the rustle of an angel's wing. She had scarcely withdrawn her presence, when, lo! the fairest creature that human eyes ever saw, drew near to the bedside of Vincent. Eyes tender and beautiful now met his gaze. A smile played on the face of the heavenly being. His robe was as white as the driven snow. It was in truth an angel! Vincent had often read about angels but he never expected to behold one, in this world at least.

"My dear child," you are lonely for your mother, aren't you?" said the angel, pressing his lips to Vincent's troubled brow." "Oh, yes, good spirit, I am," the little chap made answer. Say," said he, changing his cry to another key, "you can bring me to heaven, can't you? Just leave me at the

gate. I will find my way." The angel smiled at the boy's simple faith, and said, "You trust in me. Come then to paradise!"

Softly as a cloud of incense they began to rise heavenward. High, higher up they soared. Oh! where am I?" gasped the young boy. Hark! whence comes that melody? "Ah!" said the angel, "you are now nearing the portals of paradise, where your mother dwells. Space is nothing to a spirit, you know." By a light that crept about him gradually, as the dawn, he saw thousands of heavenly spirits encircling a great white throne, singing in harmony the while.

Their music swelled and grew sweeter as it swelled. He had often seen the glory of the setting sun, but this scene was a thousand times more entrancing. "Oh! who is that young Queen so very lovely, surrounded by that choir of angels?" cried Vincent pointing with his finger.

"That," said the angel, "is Our Blessed Lady. Would you like to speak to her?" "O yes! hurry me to her," said the delighted little chap, biting the tips of his fingers, "she knows I love her."

With the rapidity almost of light, Vincent was borne along through the scented courts. Quick as a flash everything, just

here, grew dark. The little youngster, in terror, put out his hand and cried, "Oh! angel, where are you? Lead me on. All is so dark."

A rumbling noise almost deafened him. He heard the voices of children moaning. "Oh, what is this, where am I?" Vincent now screamed.

Suddenly a light darted into his eyes, but one far less brilliant than that he first beheld. A gladdening face moved close to his. It was not that of the angel.

"Why are you moaning, Vincent, my child," called a gentle spirit. His two little eyes bulged with fright, but he grew calm. Then said he as he awoke, "Oh! didn't I get back quick? Now the good sister thought then, as she ever has since, that Vincent was dreaming. He told me later on, however, that he never dreamed night or day. So I am prone to think, as Vincent did himself, that he was really led to heaven, just for a visit.

I am sure, little friends, that you are gladdened to know that a tiny chap like Vincent was led into paradise by an angel, even though the visit was very short.

Wouldn't it have been nice, if he had been left there? Yes, but he had a lovely trip as it was. You, children, will have

that trip some day, I hope, never to return, when you go thither at the close of your lives. You must do a little work for the Master, however, before He will call you to Himself.

Oh! gracious, I know so many sweet things to say about heaven, that the thoughts crowd and jostle one another like little apples rolling out of a barrel. So I can't say anything.

Don't you think we ought to spend our time in shaping out means of getting there rather than dreaming about it? I think so. We know how good God is, so it won't be hard to picture, what a handsome home He has fitted up for the little folks that love and serve Him here below. What's the use in hurting our imaginations anyhow, since St. Paul says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God has prepared for those that love Him.

You will smile, I know, when I tell you that every one must have a ticket to get to heaven. What is that ticket? It is the record of a virtuous life. Oh! won't it be an awful thing to be turned away from the gates of paradise on the last day? You bet it will!

That reminds me. A little friend of mine named Packie, set out one day to go to the circus. Some boys like circuses. Within the big white tent he heard the band playing, and there was laughter everywhere. He began to go through the grand gate, when a strong voice called out, "Say, little boy, where is your ticket?" I haven't any, mumbled Packie, rolling his knuckle into his eye to block a tear. Then go 'way from here," said the stern man in uniform. Packie did his bidding instantly, though his poor little heart was crushed. As he scampered home over the lonely fields, he could hear the music and laughter growing every moment more faint, then he heard them no more.

I couldn't help thinking then, as I saw the poor little chap disappear into the darkness, what a type this was of the child who will be turned away from the pleasure-ground of paradise on the last day, because of having no spiritual fund to gain admittance.

But pshaw! why should I talk so, this will never happen to you. All of you, I know, have your hearts set on heaven even now, just as the mariner directs his ship toward the haven even from the instant of setting out.

Do not be surprised if I tell you I can give you directions for reaching heaven without fail.

First of all, keep your little hearts free from the taint of the world and sin. Nothing defiled can enter heaven, you know. Secondly, you must persevere day after day in your efforts to trudge up the hill which bears the traces of your Master's journey.

Little folks in Switzerland sometimes go in groups to climb a mountain, just at sunset, to see the "King of Glory" go down the western slope in his blazing chariot. I have heard that some have climbed until they almost reached the summit, then becoming wearied, and relaxing their holds have fallen into the yawning chasm below.

There are some young folks who climb towards heaven for a few years, who remain loyal to the lessons of their school-days, but who when near the summit, that is the end of life, lose their love of holiness, and fall into the chasm of hell.

Do you, little children, keep your eyes fixed on the summit whereon your Lord dwells, and is waiting for you. Thither you must tend. When you have once reached there you can rest, and cool your fevered brows, and soothe your parched lips at the fountain of crystal water. You will

then exclaim, as so many thousands have done before you. "Oh! I am so glad I kept up my climbing. It was hard, but now it is all over. I will lay down my burden for evermore."

Evangeline.

ETERNAL SEPARATION.

As I sit down to write you a little tale to-day, children, the clouds are frowning at me, and the chill rain is pattering at the windows. The seared leaves too are chasing around in a crazy fashion, as they are fleeing from the howling winds. The fall is coming on. So I am prone to think of gloomy things. I cannot help letting my thoughts drift into a gloomy channel. I will tell you, then, the story of Evangeline.

Many miles away to the north, there stood, in the long ago, a beautiful village, called Grand Pré. Its many cozy white houses dotted here and there a fruitful valley. About this happy place, on all sides, were stretched fields upon fields of fruits and flowers. Silvery brooks went winding through the meadows and to the sea, and on the green banks the laughing children of the village would through the warm days sit and dabble their tiny feet in the chastening waters or send their frail

boats adown the stream. The farmers worked away in the fields with light hearts, and you could catch, now and then, the faint echo of their merry laughter and song, or hear the shrill note of the whistling plow-boy, as he followed the horses over the furrows. Within the homes the wives and the maidens, in their snow-white caps, sat spinning the golden flax. And their faces told the story of their souls. So the days and months passed sweetly along and no happier place in the world could be found than the village of Grand Pré.

Of all the young maidens of that village, there was none with sweeter face or purer soul than Evangeline, the daughter of Benedict the farmer. There was not a youth of the town who had not a smile to spend on her as she passed along the street. Like most little ones she had one favorite or chum. Close by her house there lived a bright-eyed little fellow whose name was Gabriel. His father was a blacksmith by trade and very often before school hour the sturdy little man would linger by the door of his father's shop and look slyly up the street to see if Evangeline were coming. When at last she would swing into view Gabriel would run off to meet her, and hand in hand they would stand and watch

the smith, who seemed bursting with light, swing his mighty blows.

In tarrying thus, they were often late for school, and so, in being punished, they became the sharers of each other's joys and sorrows.

Thus passed a few swift years and they were no longer children. Gabriel became a gallant young man, and Evangeline was called the "sunshine of St. Eulalie" because she scattered merriment wherever she went.

One evening the good father of Evangeline invited many to his house to enjoy his cheer. The guests came in twos and threes and soon the little home was filled with happy faces. Gabriel and Evangeline remained without, chatting with some of their little friends. Suddenly the music stopped, and Evangeline saw her old father come hastening down the path. "Oh, my children, he said, "I have sad news for you! For days the hostile war-ships of the English have been in the harbor. I did not then say anything, trusting the danger would pass. O, if they drive us from our homes, whither shall we go?" This quivering cry was just dying away when a band of soldiers rushed athwart the pathway. The commander drawing his sword declared

every one a prisoner. Now came the saddest scene of all. The gloom of night was coming on, and the faces of all grew ghastly as they stood looking toward the shore.

The trumpets at last began to blare, and the drums to roll. The soldiers, holding their bayonets fixed, drove ahead of them toward the shore the dwellers of that Acadian village. The good Father Felician was about, with crucifix in hand, trying to soothe the broken hearts. Floating over all, came the sweet yet sad note of the distant Angelus bell that was ringing for the last time. In mad confusion Evangeline had been parted from her loved companions. "Oh! Gabriel. Oh! Benedict, where are you?" she cried. But her voice was like a whisper, smothered in a storm. She could not be heard. She was swept along in the maddened human torrent into the hold of the waiting prison ship. The mooring was soon loosened and it started for the sea. Evangeline with her hands pressed tightly against her brow, and weeping bitterly, cast one steady glance at her home that was now in flames. "Oh!" she moaned, "I shall behold no more, my friends in the village of Grand Pré."

While this story, little friends, may be somewhat interesting, it is one that you do

not like to hear, because unlike most stories its ending is disappointing. You will know, however, why it ends so, when I tell you I have chosen it to impress you with a scene which will one day come to pass, unwelcome as it may be. This is a type of the final separation on the Last Day, when the wicked shall be taken apart from those they may have loved, and driven into banishment.

God knows, little friends, that the last judgment, with all its accompanying terror, is awful to think of. But I am going to take one phase of it only, the pain of separation.

It seems to me I can still see the despairing face of Evangeline as she looked upon the home she was to see no more. What was it that caused her the deepest pain? It surely was the separation from the parents she so loved and from Gabriel. If they had been on the ship with her she could easily have borne with the banishment. As the ship headed for the sea, however, she felt how bitter it was to be torn from father and home and loved ones. No wonder she stood at the stern of the vessel and cried: "Oh! how bitter is this separation, I shall see my home no more in the village of Grand Pré."

Truly, little friends, on the final day this pain of separation will be the portion of the wicked. The Heavenly Commander and His angels will come and will part many, not for time alone, but for all eternity. By God's just decrees all unrepenting sinners will be driven aboard the dismal ship whose destiny shall be the eternal sea of gloom. The pilot of the ship shall be Satan. They shall sail out into the channel and behold the fair home of paradise, the home lost by sin and folly, and they shall hear the Angelus too, toned by angel's voices, which every moment shall grow fainter and fainter and shall at last die away. O, the burden of the cry of the lost will then be, "We shall behold no more our friends and loved ones in the Kingdom of God's Love.

Little friends, I regret that I cannot bring a more pleasant picture before you to-day, but you have no reason to grow uneasy, for judgment holds terror only for wicked folks, and you are good. Now to encourage you to be watchful, I am going to repeat an old parable: A bride and a groom once said to their friends, "To-night our ceremony is to take place. As we come to the mansion meet us at the door with lamps, so that the ceremony may be beautiful."

Only ten fair young friends of the couple were invited.

The evening came, the moon rose and the night grew calm. Now it was taken as a great insult to the party to meet them without holding a lamp. And the ten young folks waited long, but the festive party came not. So, growing tired, they rested on the steps and soon five of them fell fast asleep. An hour went by when a cry was raised, "O, see! let us arise, the bridegroom cometh." The five that had fallen asleep became confused at these words, and said they, "O, give us of your oil, for our lamps have gone out." But the wise virgins made answer, "We cannot, lest perhaps we have not enough for ourselves." As each moment passed, the bridal train came nearer.

In the confusion, the foolish virgins ran to the store near by to purchase some. They tarried too long, however, for when they came out all was as still as death. Then said they, "Alas, the bridegroom has entered the mansion and the doors have been bolted." So they began to weep, and knocking at the door they begged to be admitted. "Lord, Lord open unto us," they pleaded, but He looking out into the darkness where they stood, made answer,

"I know you not." So they disappeared, I am told, into the night.

This little story, which our Lord Himself told so long ago, sets forth in a true light the confusion that shall come upon those wicked children on the last day who through their sins and folly shall have the sentence of banishment pronounced against them. O, I forgot to tell you the words which the bridegroom spoke to the wise virgins, "Come with me into my mansion," said He, "you shall enjoy now the feast I have prepared for you." You little folks have received a sweet invitation to the Kingdom of Heaven. The bridegroom will come for you at the hour of death. If He finds your lamp burning, that is, if your life be filled with good deeds, He shall invite you into the eternal mansion. You know what your fate will be if you live unwisely: Banishment from your true home forever.

I feel sorry for poor Evangeline, for they say she never found her loved ones. I feel sorry for any little child, too, whom the devil is beguiling on to the ship of sin, for its destiny will be the sea of despair. Be wise now, little folks; when your Lord calls for you at the final hour, be ready to greet Him with the light of faith and virtue.

The Scolding.

"You will recall, young friends, that the title of our little book is, Twenty-Nine Chats and One Scolding." We have had the chats, now for the scolding. I have purposely trailed it at the end of the book, because I have never in my life, as I can recall, scolded before. For this reason I will find it a painful duty now.

After much thought, however, I have concluded that the time has come for me to say, at least a few cross words to you.

Until now, I have held that boys could not be guilty of doing foolish things. That these were something proper to girls alone. But alas! of recent days, I have changed my views. Now, I hold to it, that all youngsters are more or less unwise, and for this reason do I chide them.

You know very well, that Almighty God has created you little folks, not for this world alone. You are only to skip through it. He has ordained you for eternal bliss with Him.

All the sweet little things that you come

across as the days pass, are not given to you as objects of the love of your little hearts. They are intended only as little "pushers" to further you on the way to your true home, where Jesus lives.

Very well, then, every little creature that my eyes rest upon, or my fingers touch, such as my tiny toys, should be to me as so many sweet helps to make me love God the more, and thus, save my soul. Yes, that is the idea.

Every time then, that I taste of candy, for instance, and that is often, or every-time I skip out to play, I must ask myself, "Does this taste of candy, or does this game help me on nearer to my God; or does it hinder me from running to Him, or veer me into a dangerous pathway?

If it does, I must cease from using it. If it does not, I may enjoy it ever.

I wish I could make this tiny gauge out of silver, and put it into the hands of all the little folks. I wish, too, that you were all little chemists, so that you could tell on the glance, whether the little pleasures, that the world holds out to you, are good for your souls or not.

It is not necessary, however, that you be very learned to know that certain little trinkets in the world, of which you may

be fond, hold you back from God, while other some hasten you to Him.

Now, I say, you young folks merit a scolding just as often as you set your heart on any pastime in this world, without putting the all important question to yourselves.

You deserve to be lectured as often as you make playthings the end of your existence instead of using them only as a means to reach your eternal end.

I suppose now, you will conclude that I am cross to all little folks, and would have them hold aloof from all fun, No, you mistake me. But I would give to you the advice of the Apostle. Whatever you do, be it even to frolic and play, do all, in the name of Our Lord Jesus. I know a little chap, who one day went into a drug-store. The clerk happened to be out. That is quite unusual, I know. The little shopper began to puff out words of awe, at sight of the big phials of pretty hue that stared at him from the shelves. "What a pretty tint this one has," said he, tilting one of them to his lips, and sipping the strange liquid.

He knew it not, but he was drinking a deadly poison. In a twinkling the poor lad lay writhing on the floor.

Now I do say that many of you, little friends, act, at times, as unwisely as the lad of whom I speak, you grasp the toys, the sweet things that loving hands hold out to you, never asking yourselves whether they be good for your souls or not.

Do try, then, little folks to become even now spiritual chemists. Do not make use of any creature that will cause your little feet to tangle, and then fall. To be very plain: Do not have any chums, or enjoy any fun that will cause you to forget your Dearest Friend or make you to love Him the less.

My scolding is over, so you can sigh in relief. Some place in Holy Scripture we are advised to be wise as serpents yet simple as doves. This advice fits you nicely—You are all like little doves, now simple and sinless. But you must be more if you would conquer the tempter. Be wise for your soul's interests.

As you pass along the highway of life, many flowers will wink at you and many birds will chirp at you. But beware. Take them as your companions only in so far as they may cheer your hearts or lighten your steps onward to your Home where Jesus your Friend waits to embrace you.

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